

# WIRE

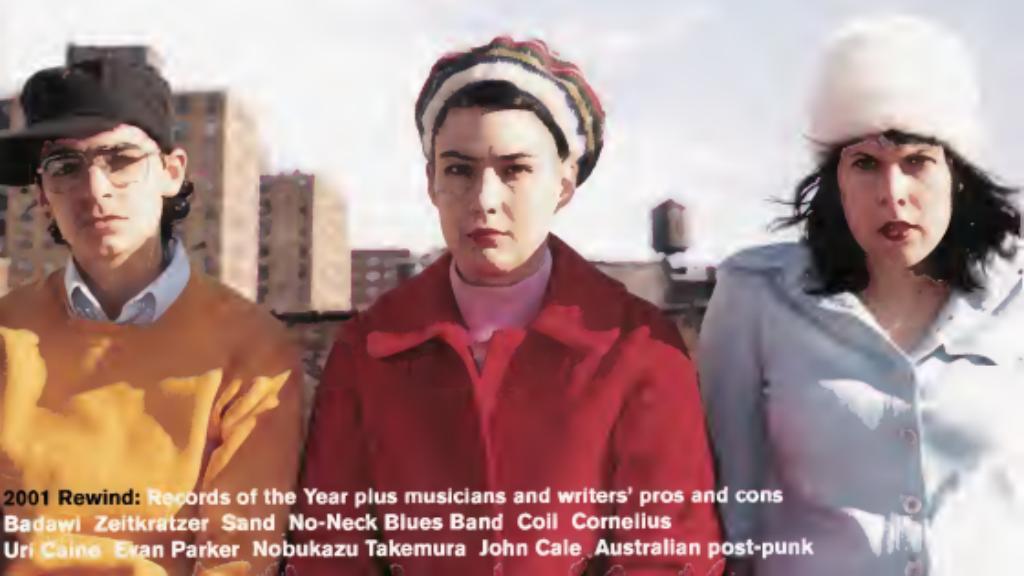
THE WIRE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

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Cabaret Voltaire  
Don Letts  
2001 Rewind

## LE TIGRE



2001 Rewind: Records of the Year plus musicians and writers' pros and cons

Badawi Zeitkratzer Sand No-Neck Blues Band Coil Cornelius

Uri Caine Evan Parker Nobukazu Takemura John Cale Australian post-punk



## ***Estrella Morente My Songs And A Poem***

The Cantaoira Estrella Morente is a rising Flamenco star. This, her long-awaited debut album, comprises traditional songs adapted by her legendary father, Enrique Morente, and features some of the best musicians Spain has on offer.

"...some of the best proof that flamenco is still alive and well. She doesn't pantheonize. She enthralls. At twenty she wears her voice like a clinging vine of cante." [flamenco-world.com](http://flamenco-world.com)

**Released February 2002**



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Deploying desert music, Middle Eastern trance, dub and turntable, Raz Meirav's Badawi project shadows the violent forces that have shaped global history. By Marcus Boon

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Everyone's favourite West London punk rude boy, video artist and DJ tries to identify tracks by Big Youth, Angelic Upstarts, Bad Brains, Vivian Goldman, Rhythm & Sound, DJ Soud and more. Tested by Ben Watson

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# The Wire Tappers

Your track by track guide to this month's FREE CD\*



01 "KUNDALINI" FROM THE RONIN ALBUM SEVEN SONGS

Recorded in 1981 by the line up of Johnney and Alex Turnbull, Fritz Caslin, Sam Mills and Tom Herlihy, with Genesis P-Orridge and Peter Christopherson playing with the knobs, "Kundalini" was the first track on the avant ethno-folksters' first album. The frenzied machine rhythms betrayed the group's desire to uncover the heart of darkness that beat at the core of the Thatcher era's shiny, happy surfaces



04 "PNEUMONIA" FROM THE FORTHCOMING NINJA TUNE ALBUM FOG

After one too many gigs spinning background hip-hop at trendy upscale cocktail lounges and a prolonged bout of pneumonia, Matt Berninger has emerged from his self-imposed baseball cap and fat lapels in favour of piano and representation. His soft-titled debut album is grounded in an adolescence испепленный сонячним грифом и пляшущим в панк-группах, but then moves outward to take in post-rock, Japanese flutes and a typically skewed rap from Arlancion a Dose One



07 "ECHO" FROM THE COLD BLUE MUSIC ALBUM I HEAR IT IN THE RAIN

The works of Los Angeles-based composer Michael Jon Fink have often been compared to those famous pioneers of the vapour trail, Brian Eno and Cocteau Twins. His music is delicate and atmospheric, with delicate lair and shimmer isn't confined to his piano works and comes over to his compositions for electronics and amplified guitar. "Echo" is a section of Fink's 1997 work, Five Pieces For Piano, and is performed here by Bryan Peterson.



02 "SHOUT AT THE DEVIL" FROM THE FORTHCOMING 30 HERTZ ALBUM SHOUT AT THE DEVIL

From his clinical, Canny dub basement with Public Image Limited to his Fourth World globetrotting with Invaders Of The Heart, the embittered John Wasile has provided the bottom end anchor to some of the most intriguing projects to emerge from the margins. His latest attempt to express the inefable, Temple Of Sound, is a collaborative venture with members of Transglobal Underground, including Natacha Atlas, who provides guest vocals here.



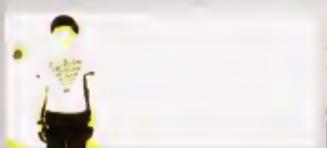
05 "HARD COUNT" FROM THE ROAD CORNE ALBUM  
I CAN CLIMB A TREE / I CAN TIE A KNOT / I CAN HAVE A CONVERSATION

Before coming together as a trio, pianist Matthew Goodheart, saxophonist Josh Allen and percussionist Garth Powell had collaborated with Cecil Taylor, Glenn Spearman, Wadada Leo Smith and Mata Guptashon. As unit their emotional mix of free jazz and moderate composition uses a broad, wide palette and witty brats to move from a quiet bonfire ground to harsher, more jagged terrain



08 "MO" FROM A FORTHCOMING LEAF LABEL RELEASE

Muncif is one of the many recording aliases of Tijuana-based Fernando Corona. As Muncif, Corona primarily works with orchestral samples and processes and treats them with an ear to the academic minimalism he acquired while scoring modern dance performances throughout the Mexican region of Baja, California. As Tarek, Corona is part of the Nortec collective which fuses Mexican popular forms with electronic music. He is also involved with the experimental projects, Elstern and Avocados, and was the keyboardist for Mexican art rockers Sonica.



03 "POINT OF VIEWPOINT" FROM THE FORTHCOMING MATADOR ALBUM POINT

Takao has born de disque from the sensitive, inquisitive scientist-primate from Planet Of The Apes, Keigo Oyamada is a shy Japanese pop superstar who crams the entire history of recorded sound into a test tube and lets it bubble over into a brightly coloured froth. Point, his second album to be released in the West, is a more reserved than his debut, *Pantama*, but still chock-full of references to The Beach Boys, The Boys, The Beatles Boys and Hawaii Aunty Glenda Keane



06 "GATE" FROM THE COLD BLUE MUSIC ALBUM ALUMINUM OVERCAST

After studying with Morton Subotnick, James Tenney and Harold Budd in the '70s, composer, inventor and soundtrack artist Chris Smith began to design his own metallic instruments as vehicles to explore the intersection between science and sensuality. His latest album, *Aluminum Overcast*, is a work for a metal menagerie of titanium sculptures and pedal steel with rhythms based on Fibonacci structures and geometric equations



09 "GABRIEL" FROM THE LET'S ROCK ALBUM ROCK IT TO THE MOON

This Brightonian female quartet first gained attention in 2000 with a string of singles – "Film Music", "Le Tigre" and "Gabriel" – and a support slot with the mighty Le Tigre. Keyboardist Vicky Sumner, drummer Emma Gaze, bassist Rachel Dailey and singer Mia Clarissa mix smoky, soundtrack ambience with the drive of a garage band playing their first gig at the Spodek. *Rock It To The Moon* is a sound writ large on their debut album for their own Let's Rock label.



**10**  
"THE NATURAL BRIDGE" FROM THE REVENANT ALBUM  
STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES BUT  
NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME

The Na-Neck Blues Band are a New York based eight-piece who play a mix of blues, rock and funk. The band's crass and crannies, popping up occasionally to deliver a dose of rambunctious trance Americana. Banjos, tribal drums, rattling bicycle wheels, peals of Ayer squawk, hardy-gurdy, meowing ladies, hittity monkees and late night piano coo-coo like Captain Beefheart and Walker Evans leading a band of Oke cracka in a Hate Krishna perched down Main Street Muskogee



**11** SET FIRE TO FLAMES  
"OMAHA" FROM THE 199701 ALBUM  
SONGS REIGN REBUILDER

Set Fire To Flames are a collective of 13 musicians from the independent, hyper-creative musical community of Montreal including members of Exhalat, Fly Pan Ann, Godspeed You Black Emperor, and A Bitter Harvest. Emerging from a desire to fully immerse and erase themselves in a collective group improvisation, the 13 people involved locked themselves into a decaying house for five days and explored choices, trance states and the creepy atmospheres provided by their surroundings. The results were later edited and reassembled via computer



**12** FÜR WEN? FROM THE SONG ALBUM ES LIEBT DICH  
HIER KÖRPERLICHKEIT, EIN AUSGEFÜHLT PAPER

Cologne's Kai Althoff, Stefan Abry and Stefan Mohr first got together in the early 80s, but released their first album on Endayson in 1990. Often compared to fellow Cologneans Can (Althoff studied with the late Michael Karoli), Workshop explore similar but more fractured and less bass-heavy territory. Their extended jam-sessions are bolstered by Althoff's polished lyrics and a 'fun on a wimpel' style piano prowess inspired by Indian film music (Abry helped assemble the recent *Doo-Doo O'Rama* compilation)



**13** "CLOO HOPPER" FROM THE FORTHCOMING HOT AIR  
ALBUM CARBON DATING

Small Rocks is the latent project from the Mancunian scourge of intellectual property law, Matt Ward. Since the late 80s, as part of Block, Heusen & Wilkman and as the head honcho of the Hot Air label, Ward has been travelling the merrymaking, attempting to bring the spirit of the Improv jams he witnessed in the Improv community, bring a sense of humour to the world of mathematics school and generally living by his motto, "The powers that be made the samplers, the powers that be sold us the vampires, the powers that be will have to live with the consequences"



**14** "STUFFING BOX" FROM THE MILLE PLATEAUX ALBUM  
PUMP

The Rip Off Artist is Angelino Metti Haines, who had worked under a bewildering number of guises and for a bewildering number of labels before emerging in 2001 as The Rip Off Artist with three albums for three different labels; Hot Air, Quatermass and Mille Plateau. Pump was allegedly inspired by several years spent aboard a drilling rig off the coast of California



**15** HELVITS SYMPHONY NO 1 FOR 13 GUITARISTS  
(EXCERPT) FROM THE KITCHEN MOTORS ALBUM  
NAR NIBBLES

The Helvits (Darned) Guitar Symphony features Jon Þór Þorgrímsson, Héðin Jónasson, Þórir Halgrímsson, Kristín Þóris, Ólver Þorgrímsson, Einar Krúlfur Þorsteinsson, Pall Lyðólfur, Hreyf Hauksdóttir, Héðna Gunnar Óskarsdóttir, Gyða Vélysdóttir, Valgerður Þóra Helgadóttir Ágússdóttir on electric guitars. Unlike earlier work, the Great Blanca of Steve Reich, the Helvits Symphony works essentially as a canon with each guitarist, wedge from the man three who are able to improvise, playing repeating patterns of half-notes until they all meet at a final, cosmic drone



**16** "KYRO" FROM THE FORTHCOMING FAT CAT ALBUM  
TOMORROW NEVER COMES

Xiaoguapu are the duo of Yusuke Okano and Takayuki Shioya from Ōita in south west Japan. Their debut release was on Fat Cat in December last year, "All You Need Is Love Was Not True". Their forthcoming album, Tomorrow Never Comes, features sparse beatbox ambience and some contemporary slurring, primitive electronics, but dominated by monstrous layered guitars, it more closely resembles My Bloody Valentine or early Jesus And Mary Chain.



**17** "POWERCHILD" FROM THE INCEPTION/HELLFIRE SPLIT EP

The Noxig two consist of Ketil D Bransfeld on bass and guitar, Nils Erga on viola and keyboards, and Jon Christian L Kykk on drums. From a small town on the west coast of Norway where the weather is often so bad you can't possibly leave, the Noxig Swanger scene, these sludge rock misfits revel in a type of detuned magnum opus they call 'Nor Wave', a crushing, lurching genre hopping No Wave hybrid with roots in early Sabbath, Glass, The Misfits and The Lacoste

**18** THE WIRE TIPPER #8 is given away to all The Wire's subscribers worldwide, and is also available with all copies of the issue sold in shops in the UK. Due to unavoidable copyright restrictions, it is not available with copies of the issue sold in shops outside the UK. If you live outside the UK but are not yet a subscriber you can still get a copy of the CD by taking out a new subscription this month (see page 100).

UK readers: if your CD is not attached to the issue, please tell your newsagent or email sub@thewire.co.uk



**CONSOLATION BY HUMAN GREED**  
RE:SC02

Staggering, dark and compelling, *Consolation* is the debut release from Edinburgh collective Human Greed. Writer Michael Rugg and artist Deryk Thomas (responsible for late-period *SWANS* artwork) offer us a dark cornucopia of soundscapes each sculpted with a poet's eye for detail and an obsessive ear for sound.

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**ANGEL PASSAGE BY ALAN MOORE AND TIM PERKIS**  
RE:PCD04

Following on from the critical-acclaim of last year's *The Highbury Working*, Alan Moore turns his psychogeographic eye to the life and works of William Blake.

Originally performed at London's Purcell Room as part of this year's William Blake retrospective, *Angel Passage* is an illuminatory waltz through Blake's mystical world told in the magical words of Moore and set to the mimetic musical moods of Tim Perkis. *Angel Passage* is proud positive of Moore's position as a storyteller of enchanting proportions.

**other recent releases ::**

- 011 Ohno Yoshihide/Voice Crack: Bits, Bits & Signs
- 012 Thomas Lehr/Marcus Schmickler: Bert
- 013 Toshimaru Nakamura/Sachiko M. do
- 014 Phil Demmel/Thomas Lehr/Rudi Molletti: dach
- 015 Axel Dörner/Kevin Drumm
- 016 Sikkappayen/Tv Pow: We Are Everyone in the Room

**new releases ::**

- 017 Car Fisher/Bert-Jan Prins: The Flirts
- 018 Keith Rowe/Toshimaru Nakamura: Weather Sky
- 019 Greg Kelley/Jean Lescallier: Portion Green
- 020 Grzegorz Kacsi/Domenico Scalfari: Right After

**coming soon ::**

- 021 MIMED/John Tilbury: The Hands Of Caravaggio
- 022 pair/e, z+
- 023 Polweichsel/Fenniez
- 024 Keith Rowe/Thomas Lehr/Marcus Schmickler
- 025 Jérôme Neuteling/ErikM
- 026 Sachiko M/Ami Yoshida: Cosmos
- 027 Burkhard Stengel/Dreb 13
- 028 Andres Neumann/Burkhard Beins

erstwhile records

# Letters

**Write to: Letters, *The Wire*, 2nd Floor East, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, UK  
Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, email [letters@thewire.co.uk](mailto:letters@thewire.co.uk)**  
**Letters should include a full name and address**



Watching the fur fly: Jim O'Rourke

## O'Rourke 'n' roll

Thanks for properly covering the rather excellent Mercury Rev (*The Wire* 214). I also enjoyed David Toop's review of Jim O'Rourke (*Soundcheck*, same issue). I would like to point out that the reason O'Rourke fits uncomfortably between the pop world and the avant garde universe is not because we live in some post-industrial digital age. It is simply because he doesn't make good records that relate to either area. Also could you get someone interesting and known for the invisible Jukebox for a change? I haven't heard of any of these people. Perhaps get Kevin Shields to have another go – I'm sure he's not doing anything! And will you please stop playing people Throbbing Gristle records – they're shit, OK?

**Allastair Stevenson** Halifax, UK

## Jukebox jive

The comments made by Kirk Degiorgio after being played the track "20 Jazz Funk Greats" by Throbbing Gristle (Invisible Jukebox, *The Wire* 214) were jaw-dropping to say the least. Of course, everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but to come out with a statement like, "I thought they were bad copies of House music..." and tried to do it themselves and then claimed some sort of lineage to Chicago disco". TG

**THE WIRE**

were utilising sequenced rhythms and "soundbites" as well as "found cut-up speech" a full ten years before Degiorgio's heroines in dance music – albeit a more abstract way.

The pure genius of Throbbing Gristle's Peter Christopherson in 1976-77, using his own photocamera via a number of car stereo cassette machines which were then triggered by a hotwired makeshift keyboard, is evidence enough that this group of individuals were among the most important innovators of the last century, especially now that all and sundry are embracing today's technology that derives from those embryonic ideas.

**Tim Jones** Manchester, UK

## Wide of the Markham

Having sat and read the inevitable "Radiohead on the cover" discussions with little more than distracted interest, I now find I can't help but reply to Pete Markham's letter in *The Wire* 214.

I have followed the progress of Radiohead at a distance since sharing a school with some of the group and witnessing most of their early Oxford gigs, fortunately however losing interest in their particular brand of impenetrable guitar rock long before they did. Radiohead should be applauded for taking the brave step that is *Amnesiac*, yet as Ian Penman accurately

pointed out in his review (208), this should not blur any appraisal of the record as a piece of work. It is not elitism to point out that it is a confused mess of a record, a collage of disparate, ill thought out parts that add up to less than their sum. *Amnesiac* is interesting and shows promise but little more (and yes, I have listened to it). There are a multitude of lesser known groups both sides of the Atlantic making similar records, many with better end results. I could also add to Mr Penman's list of mainstream musicians whose excursions into experimentalism have been more successful than Radiohead's. Giving a whole page review and an eight page interview to a group with Radiohead's history and current standing is not the action of a magazine with an elitist readership. It is probably, however, the cleverly calculated (and in my opinion highly laudable) action of a magazine looking to lure potential new readers, readers who are probably looking for more than the *NME* can offer them.

I also take offence at being considered sexist for not having the same response to seeing Björk on the cover two issues later. To compare Björk's music down the years to the generic indecency numbers that Radiohead were responsible for before *Kid A* is a complete mismatch. While I personally find little of interest in her own slightly left of mainstream take on the pop song, Björk has ploughed the same creative furrow for

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## Letters

many years, dating back to the skewed surrealist pop of The Sugarcubes. She has, therefore, appeared on the cover of *The Wire* three times, the earliest in 1993 (issue 114), but then I got the feeling Mr Markham would have been reading *Select* around this time and may not be aware of *The Wire's* continued support for a thoughtful, creative artist. *The Wire* has been battering the boundaries at both ends of the creative spectrum for many years now. It has always been enquiring and forward-thinking and its readership is, on the whole, reflected in this.

**Richard Pinnell** Didcot, UK

Peter Markham (Letters, *The Wire* 214) questions the difference in negative reaction to the cover stories of Radiohead [lots] vs Björk [title or none], speculating sexism might be responsible. I'll let history prove it, but I predict it will end up revering Björk projects like *Holographic* and *Visperose*, while doing little more than nodding in the direction of *Kid A* and *Amnesiac*. I propose that similar feelings among the readership are behind Markham's quandary.

**Vincent Karkatzis** Athens, Greece

## Back door man

A question: Could it be that the Jerry Hopkins who wrote the Global Ear from Thailand (*The Wire* 213) is the same Jerry Hopkins who was a big cheese at Rolling Stone back in the days, mate of Jim Morrison and author of the immortal Morrison/Doors blog *No One Gets Out Of Here Alive?* If so, wow! So that's where he's been hiding all these years. If not, well, it was still a nice article.

**Mark Booth** via email

Yes, they are one and the same Jerry Hopkins. Strange days indeed – Ed

## Jim's kind of town – not

After reading the Jim O'Rourke interview in *The Wire* 213, I was more annoyed than usual by O'Rourke's egotistical babbling. I am glad that he has discovered English folk music, however it seems he is under the illusion that everyone should be listening to what he listens to. It's interesting that someone who claims to possess such broad knowledge of recorded music seems to hold such a narrow view of the art and community. It was quite amusing to read as he sat around and bitched about how Chicagoans like to sit around and bitch, most of which seems to have ended since his departure. Perhaps if O'Rourke were a little less self-obsessed he would notice the many fine musicians and artists in the city that helped start him on his path to superstardom. And it is with great pleasure that I hear of his desire never to return, as

many of its citizens wish he would have left much sooner. In closing, I would like to thank the Citizens For An O'Rourke Free Chicago on a job well done. This is a great time to be living in Chicago.

**Michael Hartman** Chicago, USA

## Dimwit minority

With reference to Jim O'Rourke's comments (*The Wire* 213) about the response of some of the audience to Sonic Youth's Goodbye 20th Century performance at the Royal Festival Hall in summer 2001, it's true that there was certainly a contingent of dimwits who ostensibly were unable to comprehend the information on the ticket. In fact, the four lager-sozzled hafwits who were sitting behind me and calling out for "Teenage Riot" for most of the evening, severely affecting my enjoyment of the concert, finally gave up as their patience was stretched to its limit during the Cage piece and left the auditorium, nosily, while hollering abuse similar to that which O'Rourke quotes. However, I do believe that it was a minority and I would like to inform O'Rourke that most of us enjoyed and appreciated it all very much and please let him and Sonic Youth both play here again very soon.

**Gore D Laughlin** via email

## Pale writers

In response to the article written by Philip Sherburne and Jim Haynes on the Beyond The Pale festival in San Francisco this past August (On Location, *The Wire* 212), I would like to offer a different point of view, one that I feel is a more accurate description of what happened that weekend. After more than a year of planning, Steve Von Till's sound scenes brought together 14 unique groups over four nights, ranging from the quasi-Ambient Techno of "zovet france" to the dysfunctional and emotive Dobow.

Catagorising Scott Kelly and Steve Von Till's individual performances as "virtually identical" leaves me with a sour taste, and I feel is a surprisingly lazy effort for writers of this calibre. Kelly's bold a cappella performance, which I agree does share some similarities with the emotion of Johnny Cash and Marie Haggard, was a far cry from Von Till's orchestrated set piece, whose obvious influences lie more within traditional Celtic music than American Country. Amber Asylum, a four piece consisting of electric cello, violin, bass and drums put on, as always, an intriguing show. Even if they are not your cup of tea, their exquisite mix of classical and Metal influences is something at least to be recognised. The mindnumbing response from Sherburne/Haynes was ridiculous. "Amber Asylum then took the stage and shouldn't have." They don't tell us why. They don't offer anything else. The crowd's response was more

than appreciative, even in anticipation of Michael Gira's performance. As to the repeated reference to Neurosis and "grindcore": they are not grindcore. Their meld of different styles and musical influences are a world away from that scene. Loud guitars don't make a group grindcore, it just makes them loud. Once again, either out of laziness or just mere incompetence, the article also fails to even mention the performance of Tribes Of Neuror, Neurosis's alter ego, who exhibited a massive wall of soundscapes, propelling the audience into an almost hypnotic state as everyone watched virtually in silence.

The writers of this article missed everything important about the festival. The spirit of the music not only brought many different fans together, it also brought many respected musicians together. Reading a large number of Sherburne's articles and reviews, it is very apparent that his interests are mainly in electronic music. I would hope that his journalistic objectivity does not end in that genre. Included in Haynes' Aquarius Records staff's favourites list are selections from Michael Gira, zovet france and Tarentel; coincidentally these were among the very few positive reviews for the festival. I would like to think there was not a vindictive modus operandi here, I hope instead that the reporting was simply uninformed, and they didn't choose to intentionally trash something that so many people worked so hard to bring to a reality, and that many more people enjoyed.

**Josh Graham** Los Angeles, USA

## Corrections

### Issue 214

In Soundcheck, an error was inadvertently subbed into Bill Shoemaker's review of the Anthony Davis CD *Tana* (Koch International Classics). Gerry Hemingway is of course a drummer, not a pianist.

In Print Run, the author of Verschwindende Deine Jugend is Jürgen Teipel, not Teipei as stated.

In The Directory, the distributions of Celestial Harmonics were omitted; they are Discord Distribution, P.O. Box 50, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9ZP T 01892 863888 F 01892 863804 [www.Discord.co.uk](http://www.Discord.co.uk). Le Systeme Records, who released Raphe Malik's Speak Easy CD, reviewed in the Jazz & Improv column, were also omitted. Their details are: 73-275 King Street East, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 1K2 T 001 738 932 9015 F 001 209 254 8621, [info@lesysteme.org](mailto:info@lesysteme.org), [www.lesysteme.org](http://www.lesysteme.org).

### Issue 213

In Tangents, the photo of Alexei Borodov on page 43 should have been credited to Anne Hamilainen.

In Critical Beasts, Zongarn is Susumu Mukai, not the solo project of Mike Silver, as was stated in Philip Sherburne's review of "Tunnel Music" (Flesh). [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk)

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The Wire's official Web presence, featuring out of print articles, news, links, database, mailing list and more.

## www.interference.tv

Interactive archive of the Interference series of mixed media live events, co-hosted by *The Wire* and the former Lux Centre.

## The Wire newsgroup

Unofficial online forum devoted to the kind of music and culture covered in *The Wire* [www.groups.com/subscribe/thewire](http://www.groups.com/subscribe/thewire)

## Coming next month

# Hefty: Sample This

With the February issue of *The Wire*, all subscribers worldwide will receive a free copy of an exclusive new compilation from John Hughes's Chicago-based Hefty label. See the inside back cover for details.

**The Wire** 216: on sale from 29 January



# Bitstream

**News and more from the outer limits.**  
**Compiled by The Trawler**

## Parties people: Cheap Trick

So glad to see you! It might be a long way from the Budokan, but the mighty Cheap Trick will be headlining at Camber Sands Holiday Centre for this year's UK **All Tomorrow's Parties**, curated by Steve Albini. Raising hell with Rick Nielsen, Bun E Carlos, Robin Zander and Tom Petersen between 19-21 and 26-28 April will be Tom Verlaine, Bonnie Prince Billy, Low, The Breeders, Rachel's, The Fall, The Ex Orkest, Melt Banana, Alton's group Shells, Blonde Redhead, The Lonesome Organist, Dismalusion Family, Plush, Arcwelder, Neurosis, Shipping News, Trendy Ensemble, Brick Layer Cake and many other leading lights of the independent rock firmament. Tickets and more information are available at [www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk](http://www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk). Meanwhile, the American version of ATP, originally supposed to take place last October but postponed due to the 11 September attacks, has been rescheduled and will now take place over 15-17 March at UCLA in Los Angeles, California. Curated by **Sonic Youth**, featured performers include Aphex Twin, Bedrooms, Cecil Taylor, Dead C, Tony Conrad, Lydia Lunch, Television, Gerard Malanga, Stereolab, Fred Anderson Trio, Papa M, Neal Michael Hargrave, Peaches, Pita, Bardo Pond, Destroy All Monsters, Stevo Kinney, US Maple, Carlone, Stephen Malkmus, Unwound, White Out, Cat Power, John Sinclair and da Yoof themselves. The newly minted All

Tomorrow's Parties label will also release a compilation (with material from Sonic Youth, Cannibal Ox, Dead C, Stereolab, Unwound, Kevin Drumm and Papa M) to mark the organisation's Stateside foray. +++ Decomposing. At 6.30pm on 2 November, Swiss police, on high alert following the events of 11 September, stormed the five-star hotel room in Basle where French composer **Pierre Boulez** was staying. He was then taken into police custody for a few hours because his name appeared on a list of people who could potentially pose a threat to national security. Always known as an outspoken polemicist, Boulez

apparently made the list because, around 30 years ago, he was quoted as saying that all opera houses should be blown up – oh, and also for allegedly making a threatening phone call to a critic who had written a particularly negative review of one of Boulez's performances, which included a bomb threat. +++ The riot's over. **Carl Cracker**, MC and founder member of Alan Teenage Riot, was found dead at his apartment on 6 September. Cracker, born Carl Bohm in Swaziland, was 30 years old. The circumstances of his death are still unclear, but many reports blame an alleged history of psychotic attacks and a prolonged bout with alcohol and drug abuse. More news from the ATR camp concerns **Alec Empire**, whose forthcoming solo album, *Intelligence & Sacrifice*, was recorded with a group that, like such undubbed Empire faves as The Allman Brothers, Grateful Dead, Gitar Band and The Fall, features two drummers. +++ Simulated adventures on the wheels of steel: London reissue label Shut have joined forces with **Grandmaster Flash** in an effort to recreate the block party atmosphere of New York's Bronx circa 1980. Although *The Official Adventures Of Grandmaster Flash* (released 28 January) includes snippets of original tapes from back in the day, the bulk of the album finds Flash digging in the memory banks to recreate the celebrated mixes he used to rock the party with at the T-Connection and Disco Convention. +++ Hell's bells! The time for the resurrection of **Richard Hell** is nigh. In addition to *Hot & Cold*, a collection of Hell's writing and drawings due to be published in February, in March Matador is releasing a double CD collection of rare Hell material. The album includes tracks from Hell's tour of duty in Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers, live material previously issued on ROR's RIP cassette in 1984, and live sets from London's Music Machine and New York's CBGB's in 1977. For info, see Hell's personal homepage at [www.richardhell.com](http://www.richardhell.com). +++ All good cretins go to heaven.



It's not 53rd and 3rd, but the corner of East 2nd Street and the Bowery in New York's East Village (within gobbing distance of CBGB's) is to be named after **Joey Ramone Place** in honour of the Big Apple's favourite punk rocker, who died in April. +++ **Only Connect**, London Barbecan's annual series of collaborative and specially commissioned concerts, will take place on selected dates over the period 10 March-27 April, and will feature Mansanne Faithfull, John Zorn, blending surf, exotica and cocktail jazz, Melvin guitar and vocalist Afel Bocoum performing with Blur's Damon Albarn, soundtracker and Massive Attack string arranger Craig Armstrong, Yip La Tengo playing live accompaniment to Jean Parlevé's whims of mating jellyfish, Sjörg Rós and Hrimar Órn Hilmarsson creating a new version of the Nordic Æðta saga; and Mouse On Mars and Plaid scoring video games. +++ Back to the stars. As a follow up to their *In The Beginning There Was Rhythm* compilation of UK post-punk funk, which is released this month, the impressible Soul Jazz label is working on a compilation of Mancunian disco existentialists. **A Certain Ratio** The set is due for release in the Spring. +++ The latest issue of former Sonic Youth drummer Bob Mould's **Bigfan** zine is out now and includes writing by Lydia Lunch, Thurston Moore and Bent himself, plus interviews with Yoshimi from Bedrooms, Richard Hell and Nancy Sinatra. Go to [www.bbgf.org/](http://www.bbgf.org/). +++ Over the borderline, German radio station **Borderline** will once again be broadcasting *The Wire's Top 50 Records Of The Year* (see this month's 2003 Rewind). If you're in North Hesse or Lower Saxony, their terrestrial broadcast begins on 4 January on 105.8 MHz. The rest of the world can point their Web browsers to [www.borderline-extras.de](http://www.borderline-extras.de) to listen in. The first instalment will be available on 7 January, with new ones added every Monday until 28 January. Send Bitstream items to [trawler@thewire.co.uk](mailto:trawler@thewire.co.uk).

# Death Row

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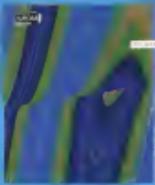
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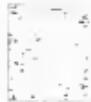
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# No-Neck Blues Band

Flea war freakouts. By David Keenan

'We'd like to shake the deeply American, the naked, the experimental, the ritual as baggage in favour of good old adjectives, adverbs, gerunds,' proclaims New York freakout ensemble The No-Neck Blues Band's latest statement. 'Our backgrounds are each our own and we're aware of history, in tune with culture and maintaining various disciplines. But NNCK is not divisible to those interests as factors, so they in themselves are not relevant. There's plenty of individual personality, just not blatant personification of idioms.'

For six years now, The No-Neck Blues Band, or NNCK for short, have been a wittily mysterious entity on the avant fringes of New York's downtown music scene, staging low-balling, improvised guerrilla performances on rooftops and in parks, raising the skies with an electroacoustic hybrid that owes as much to The Memphis Jug Band as it does to the original Anthon Dull and early Red Crayola. NNCK are a septet of record collectors and beards, looking like some great vagabond offshoot from The Living Theatre, augmented by a female Japanese saxophonist and performance artist. They're fiercely independent and notoriously guarded, preferring listeners to stumble over their music without any preconceptions. Arguably, however, their techniques (very limited edition vinyl and CD releases on their own label Sound@One, cryptic pseudo-mystic texts, unadvertised performances) help define them even more acutely.

And most interviews consist of questions answered by group statements signed 'The NNCK'.

"NNCK is certainly social music," reveals NNCK's Jason Moagher. "We perform socially, the group is our social interaction with each other, our performances are mainly promoted word of mouth and tend to be in open public places unless they are a specific event. NNCK is also simply made up of the number of members involved at any given time. There has been talk of another number, that being the sum of the parts as a single entity as another contributor."

Indeed, the NNCK sound is singularly invariable into its constituent parts. It breathes and throbs with one mind, often flowing from the slightest clank of percussion into an Arkestral hootown of sinewy noise, minimalist thump and the weave of burning bowed strings. Their latest disc, *Sticks And Stones May Break My Bones But Names Will Never Hurt Me*, comes courtesy of the late John Fahey's Reverent label. NNCK were famously the only contemporary group he ever claimed to dig, and their album for his label marks a huge sidestep for NNCK in terms of its pristine fidelity, captured by The Lovin' Spoonful's Jerry Nester in Harrison, Arkansas, after a month long tour supporting Fahey. All that extra sonic detail works to NNCK's advantage, making beautifully overt their dexterous balance between microtonal texture and big percussive stampedes.

"The band's inception lasted through what we saw as the rise and fall of the rock grunge underground in NYC," explains multi-instrumentalist David Nuss. "We befriended and learned from bands like Circle X, and our first proper gig was supporting Bobbetomagus and Circle X at Sidewalks by the Seashore at Coney Island in June of 1993. Our enthusiasm for live music, which indicated some vitality lacking in this arena, led us into more experimental forums: avant garde jazz, performance art and dance venues as well as 'art' and its stages. Through this our community grew, and NNCK eventually coagulated to fill the gap in what we felt was missing in all of this." Soon the group moved to its own studio space, 195 Chrystie Street in New York, where they set up shows with fellow sound thinkers like guitarists Alan Licht and Dean Roberts's White Winged Moth. Then began a dolece of beautifully packaged discs courtesy of the group's own imprint and select underground labels like Ecstatic Peace and New World Of Sound. Early releases were genre-defiant exercises in non-idiomatic free sound, ranging from the minimal stomach grumbling of *The Cleaning* to the widescreen

velocity of the double CD set *Letters From The Earth*.

"A tradition of yearly NNCK rooftop concerts on Orthodox Easter began at the artist Rita Ackermann's loft at 264 Canal Street," Nuss recalls, "yielding *Letters From The Earth* in '97, *Letters From The Serpent* in '98 and *Birth Of Both Worlds* in 1999. The lease was up on 195 Chrystie and NNCK began its first true guerrilla routine, performing weekly in Chinatown's Columbus Park, augmented regularly in mime by local legend Luke, a Chinese dwarf/mystic. Now something had to give. Though thriving to some extent on open air, non-traditional goggling, [our] organisation and future planning was becoming nil, and morale was at a low ebb. With a blind leap of faith, we convened at 638 West 131st Street, an available-for-rent three floor warehouse in Harlem, NYC, fall of '97. Having served in its previous incarnation as a hair salon cum 'social club', we tended it to house NNCK, saxophonist Tamio Shiraishi - ex-Fushishusha - artists Mary Nicholson and Temara Gayer, photographer Sara Press and two floors of private domesticity, dubbing it The Hint House, our headquarters to this day."

NNCK still play a weekly gig/rehearsal at The Hint House, in a huge cavernous room scattered with instruments, which members pick up and discard at will, while at the other end of the room, Nicholson and Gayer work on huge canvases. Indeed, The Hint House has become a lightning rod, drawing underground artists like Loron Mazzacane Connors, The Electro-Putus and Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo, all of whom have gigged there with NNCK. "Our music continues increasing in depth and purpose," Nuss concludes. "Our repeat gigs reflect this, both back at us and to the present. Self-publishing is really our only forte, so that's next as always. Peace to the soul of John Fahey and his guardian angel alike, and may they both continue to watch over us. Space is still the place. We'll see you on the other side..." *Sticks And Stones May Break My Bones But Names Will Never Hurt Me* is out now on Reverent.



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--Jeff Bagato, Mute #13 (Fall 2000)



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# Sand

Born gritty. By Mike Barnes



"The many and varied musical backgrounds of the current Sand line-up lead the group to argue violently at length about compositional and performance ideas, but almost always come to a clear artistic understanding and musical direction," says Hilary Jeffery, trombonist with British group Sand. "These tensions are clearly audible on recordings and also visible on gigs." If the result is as potent, Sand's second album from Satellite, *Still Born Alive*, then may this fractious element last forever. It displays a multiplicity of textures and timbres, mostly descending into a dark and vengeful zone: muscular drum beats jostling for space with chattering, arcing electronics; serrated wah-wah guitar, bass which veers from melodic to monstrous; and a trombone treated to sound, in Jeffery's words, like "underwater brass bands". Operating since 1995, Sand were born from York-based producer Tim Wright's innovative electronics project, Germ, which released a couple of albums on GPR (1995's *Parrot* features some extraordinary Improv noise trombone from Hilary Jeffery). Nowadays, Wright records under his own name, and a couple of years ago ventured into the realm of pumping minimal Techno under the alias Tube Jerk. How easy was it to move from essentially solo electronics to a group format?

"Germ started out with me working on my own but, within a year or two, by 1994, it had developed into a group," he corrects. "Sand began evolving while Germ was still active. So my activity has just become more polarised. I now nearly always make electronic and dance music on my own, but I get different things out of music at different times – I love doing *Tube Jerk* gigs and seeing 1000 people going crazy in a club in the middle of rural Germany. With Sand, I'm involved in a group creating amazing music which I could never have imagined or made on my own."

One can understand the intra-group clashes that fuel Sand's music by contrasting the musicians' colourful histories. Gunterist Neil Griffiths has played with Soma; bass and electronics player John Richards graduated to electroacoustic music via a punk group and a Keith Tippett jazz workshop; Jeffery is currently based in Holland, where he studies trombone and electronics with avant-garde composer James Tucker, and is building a "trombosillator". Their new drummer is Neil Sir Reel, also a DJ and record producer.

Sand's live debut, a concert they organised called The Graveyard Shift, took place last summer at Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington, North London. "We needed a guaranteed audience," quips Jeffery. "Neil Griffiths wasn't in the band at the time, but he came to the gig and rolled around naked in the nettles – after that performance he was booked."

Following this unorthodox unveiling, the group went on to play at venues as diverse as the Volksoper in Vienna (at the Audio Inn event organised by Patrick Pulsinger, with whom they were touring); a car park in Paris attended by "freaks in out-and-shit costumes"; and along with Chicks On Speed on a stage constructed on a lake at the Custard Factory in Birmingham.

But most remarkable was their December 2000 performance in a show entitled *Raj Packer* at Tokyo's New National Theatre. Karas, a dance troupe led by choreographer Saburo Teshigawara, was looking for music for a new show, but heard Sand's 1999 debut *Beautiful People Are Evil* at the 11th hour. They soon found themselves playing in front of 1000 Japanese dance aficionados and a selection of dignitaries. The pastoral section of the show saw the appearance of real livestock. Jeffery takes up the story: "Neil serenaded a cow, which licked his guitar in return. Chickens were chased across the stage, there were dancing goats, rabbits, an opera-singing Sumo

wrestler, intense lights and beautiful choreography – it was a bizarre and wonderful way to end the year."

"It's all true," confirms Wright. "The dancers were complaining that the animals cost more to hire than they got paid." Raj Packer won two awards and the group are booked to go over for its sequel in 2002. Could this spell more collaborations in the area of dance? Jeffery has reservations: "Our music seems to interact very well with dance, but probably not all dance; there is a lot of arty rubbish out there which we instinctively distance ourselves from."

Although Sand is a music rather than a multimedia group, they have also experimented with video, Super 8 and slides, and Satellite Records have commissioned independent film makers to produce footage for their live shows. "We decided that films could play a much larger role in our performances, offering possibilities for interludes, montages, improvisations and back-row necking," says Jeffery. "It seems that everyone is doing music with films these days, so we still also want to play more directly, more loud in dark venues without visuals."

Until now, the visuals have been inspired by the music simply because the group didn't have contact with the artists until after it was released. But having improved the music for Raj Packer with the dancers until a structure emerged, the group don't rule out further two-way interaction. "Now that there is a clear link with dance and film, it is likely to influence how we write and record much more," admits Jeffery. "Certain members of the band have done a lot of work in theatre, performance and dance while others prefer music to stand alone first and foremost." One wincing at the thought of the violent arguments this new task will surely provoke: "Still Born Alive is out now on Satellite Sound. We'll be touring a cinema project around the UK through January and February – see local press."

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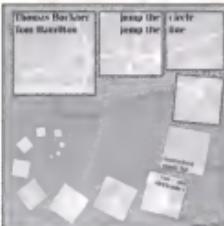
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# Zeitkratzer

**Scraping time.**  
By Julian Cowley

Zerkatzer with Reinhard Friedl (2nd right)

Imagine a group that performs music by Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo, Ash Ra's Manuel Gottsching, electronics icon Terre Themeritz, minimalist Phil Niblock and Michael Schumacher, and avant garde works by Luigi Nono and Helmut Lachenmann. Unlike as it may seem, that group exists: Zeitkratzer (Timescraper), directed by innovative pianist Reinhard Friedl. The ten piece ensemble was formed by Friedl in Berlin in 1997 with musical support from trumpet player Axel Dörner and institutional backing from Elke Motsch, music curator at the adventurous Podewil centre for contemporary arts. In August 2000 Zeitkratzer staged a high profile mixed-media collaboration with Lou Reed: "We attract a very heterogeneous audience," Friedl declares. "We played, for example, pieces by Merzbow and by Stockhausen in the same programme. Young noise people in black leather coats were sitting beside the classical, New Music black pullovers."

In choosing the musicians, Friedl was guided by three considerations: "Firstly, they should play extended techniques on their instruments, be open to electronics and have good stage presence. Secondly, they should have experience of different musics and be open-minded. It's a new experience in the musical life of my generation: to be confronted with very different styles. Thirdly, they should be ready to really work and accept a rehearsal situation, where you can critique each other hard without taking it personally."

Friedl already knew most of the musicians, including the remarkable saxophonist Ulrich Krieger, from working with them in different projects. He met Luca Ventucci, accordionist with Zeitkratzer, when a composition scholarship took him to Rome. All the initial members have remained with the group, except Dörner whose fertile musical activities elsewhere clashed with their rigorous rehearsal regime. He was replaced by extraordinary Viennese quartetone trumpet player Franz Hautzinger. Friedl is insistent nonetheless that Zeitkratzer should never be a full-

time job for its musicians. The group thrive on ideas, experiences and influences from outside and from solo work. "Michael Moser, the cellist, plays in Polwechsel; Melvyn Poore, the tuba player, is a directing member of Musikfabrik NRW," Friedl says. "Ray Raczynski, the percussionist plays Indian music, but also free jazz. It's the same for all the musicians." Violinist Burkhard Schlothauer additionally runs the Timescraper label, which has issued the ensemble's three acclaimed CDs. After arriving in Berlin in 1986, Friedl took piano lessons with influential improvisor Alexander von Schlippenbach and classical pianist Alvin Marks. Subsequent collaborations reflect the breadth of this training: he has performed as a duo with composer and guitarist Elliott Sharp (a retrospective is soon to be released on Grob); accompanied Stefanie Stoll, a banitone from the opera in Berlin, presenting new "kinder," and worked with pianists Michael Eber and Yun Kyung Lee as Piano-Inside-Out. That trio, dedicated to exploration of the instrument's interior, has a new CD, Works & Reworks, set for imminent release. It includes the first recording of John Cage's *Piano TWO* (which is the same score as *Carnegie Music*), a reworking of Eric Brown's *Four Systems* by Mano Bortoloni (founding member of Franco Evangelisti's Gruppo Nuova Consonanza) and reworks of compositions by Detra Schnabel and Witold Szalonek. Recordings of Friedl's revelatory inside-piano solo activities will also be released in 2002.

Zeitkratzer members frequently discuss potential projects and commissions. Tensions arise but they operate a collective agreement to use points of contention constructively, as a means to grow. A lot of care goes into programming. "I look at the whole programme like one composition," Friedl reveals. "I learned to do that from reading the autobiography of the famous pianist Walter Gieseking. I once counted the CDs Ulrich Krieger and I listened to in one year – it was around 800. I search out people I'm interested in." Friedl feels it is important to develop musical

relationships with musicians Zeitkratzer have already worked with, such as Elliott Sharp and Sensorband's Zbigniew Karkowski. He would like to play their pieces more than once or twice, to refine performance quality. The group is also keen to address the challenge of body and performance work. "We've done English composer John White's *Drinking And Hooting Machine* and La Monte Young's *Poem For Tables, Chairs, And Benches, Etc.*, pieces at the borderline of physical performance and minimal music," he says. "And we've started to work very seriously with contemporary dancers as well as video artists. We are developing a whole project with dancers including the Ruberto company, Christophe Winkler (the young bad boy of contemporary dance in Berlin) and Itoik Kovac, for a three day programme in Stuttgart in February."

In March, Zeitkratzer will realise an instrumental version of Lou Reed's controversial Metal Machine Music at festivals in Berlin and Venice. Their busy schedule also accommodates performances with Butch Morris and Christian Marclay in Berlin, and with Phil Niblock in Italy. Friedl is currently trying to secure funds for "a series of long, more than four hours daily, completely unplugged" (the musicians usually play amplified) outdoor performances in different park situations in Berlin during the summer – a live musicians installation. As artists in residence at Podewil, Zeitkratzer will stage a huge John Cage birthday party on 5 September 2002, presenting some unusual interpretations until around four in the morning. The group is also preparing a programme with young Berlin composers who have received scholarships from the city specifically to write music for Zeitkratzer. Beyond all that ... "I don't know where this project will go," says Friedl. "It's really the first time for me to build up something, but also to follow it and I'm very curious to see where it will go." — Zeitkratzer's latest CD, *Noise...Tilt*, featuring pieces by Merzbow, Zbigniew Karkowski and Doro Frier is released by Tourette. Website: [www.zeitkratzer.de](http://www.zeitkratzer.de)





## Leo Records NEW RELEASES

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**CHICAGO**  
**ZERO SUN NO POINT,**  
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**Sun Ra**

This double CD was recorded live at the Ljubljana Music Festival in Slovenia, June 28, 2000. Composition n. 169 was arranged for four saxophonists (Anthony Braxton, James Fei, Chris Jones, and Jackson Moore) and strings from Slovenia Radio Orchestra. All four saxophonists doubled as conductors. In addition to the notated composition n. 169 the performance was augmented by three "Ghost Trance" structures. This work is yet another confirmation that the imagination of a true visionary knows no bounds. Liner notes by Anthony Braxton

After the extraordinary success of "Nature Morte" (CD LR 310), Simon Nabatov comes up with a double CD based on a novel by a great Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov, "Master and Margarita". Nabatov's quintet is made up of stellar members of the New York Downtown scene: Mark Feldman (violin), Hebt Robertson (trumpet), Mark Helias (bass), Tom Rainey (drums). The book provided Nabatov with a series of formal analogues, structuring patterns, sonic constructions and moods, well-spring of feelings and emotions ranging from swing rhythms to cool jazz textures bridged by improvisation. Libretto by Simon Nabatov, liner notes by Stuart Broomer

A double CD documenting both the live performance at Munich's Marstall Theatre and broadcast by Bayreuther Rundfunk. Based on two radio plays "Zero Sun" and "No Point" by Hartmut Geerken, this incredibly complex performance involves pre-recorded texts/voices of Sun Ra, Salomo Freedlander/Mynona, Amiri Baraka, Ezra Pound, etc., incorporated into the Art Ensemble of Chicago's music, which happened to be the last recording of the late Lester Bowie. The project represents the reactivation of an old dream: one of the world's largest gong collection of Hartmut Geerken and Farnoudou Don Moye's "sun percussion" collection brought together on stage for the first time. On top of that, it was an intermedia project whereby the audience from all over the world could take part in the performance through the internet. 28-page booklet full of texts, notes and brilliant photos of the performance. Unprecedented project documented on an unprecedented double CD.

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# Global Ear: Reykjavík

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month: Akiko Hada breaks the ice to uncover the Icelandic capital's thriving art underground



Icelandic guitar god Gúlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, with Geirg Bjarnason and Thordis Claessen; Hilmar Órn Hilmarsson (right)

The only way you get to hear about interesting events in Reykjavík, a capital city that is roughly half the size of an average London borough, is through word of mouth. Often as not, the organisers aren't together enough to plan far enough ahead to make the listings magazine deadlines. But luckily you don't need to be an 'insider' to find out what's happening – stumble across one good contact in a club, say, and an entire community of experimental artists suddenly opens up to you. Within hours of arriving in Reykjavík and breathing my first intake of fresh Icelandic air, I ran into Þórður Órn Thoroddsen, or Bibbi for short, who was playing that evening with his "punk rockabilly group" Óðoskúfid (Dope Debt) with Sigrýggur Berg Sigmarsson, aka Sigg, from the noise/electronic trio Stólkupsteppir. They were supporting another wonderful, postmodern group Kanada, so called because "we were just looking for a really boring band name".

Though only 25, Bibbi is already well established on the Icelandic alternative/experimental scene. He has released five albums as Curver, the name he uses for his alternative rock output, while his more experimental and art-orientated projects are conducted under his Bibbi nickname. In addition to playing solo and in various groups, he also recently produced the album *Jesus Christ Bibbey*, by hardcore group Mines, on which ex-Sugarcubes singer Einer Órn made a guest appearance. Released locally on the Bad Taste label, it has recently been licensed to Victory in America, where the group have been picking up some good notices.

During the summer, a large retrospective of works by Ærn, an Icelandic artist based in France, was shown at the Harbour House extension to Reykjavík Art Museum. Commissioned to produce a live 30 minute "soundtrack" for Ærn's latest series, *Saga Of The*

American Comics, Bibbi reflected the subject matter and visual style of the paintings – collages of figures out of American comics, painted on large canvases – a barrage of sound/music/spoken word fragments taken from cartoon soundtracks. Played out on a Sunday afternoon, the controlled chaos of this nosescapes formed a perfect backdrop to the visual works on display.

Since it opened in summer 2000, the Harbour House has been hiring out a room to the likes of experimental music collective Kitchen Motors and Bibbi himself, who earlier this year promoted a concert featuring Pan Sonic, Próduct B (a solo electronic project by ex-Replicus member Jóhann Eriksson) and himself. Finland's screaming male choir, Mieskuoro Huutajat, have performed elsewhere in the same museum. This mélange of traditional and new forms of art on an institutional level, however, is a quite recent phenomenon in Iceland. Until the Living Arts Museum opened in the 90s, only a handful of art-run spaces were showcasing new, experimental works by young or lesser known artists, both homegrown and from abroad. One such patron is Helgi Þorlgs Frjónasson, who has been running his gallery, Ganguru (The Corridor), in a corner of his apartment for the last 20 years. Helgi and his family have moved home three times during that period, taking the 'gallery' with them each time. The show I caught featured a new installation by Charlemagne Palestine. Punning on the gallery's Icelandic name, his piece consisted of a gang of soft toy animals fixed to two small canvases and "uniting together" (via a plastic tube siphoning water from a receptacle below). The sound element was provided by the composer's own ethereal music, mixed with a recording of animals and punters taped at the Berlin Zoo. Coupled with the sound of the running water, the installation had an

amazingly soothing effect on the psyche. As with all his other work, Palestine executed this piece with a great deal of love for the little animals. It was simple, direct, silly and beautiful!

Meanwhile, over at the Naistí Bar in the city centre, Icelandic guitar god Gúlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, aka Gulli, was exhibiting blown up pages from his book, *The Physics Of Action: Electromagnetism, Nuclear Structure And Gravitation*, alongside paintings by Ágúst W. Ágúrasson. With a title like that you won't be surprised to hear that Gulli is also a respected mathematician. As a musician, he is the most important guitarist on the current Icelandic scene – his CV includes the early 80s group Theri, who, says Bibbi, "had an enormous influence on everyone who is active now"; the earlier anarchic incarnation of The Sugarcubes, called Kuki; and Eggar Sisters with Björk. In addition he has guested on albums such as David Tibet and Hilmar Órn Hilmarsson's Island, as well as recordings by Replicus, Megas and Psychic TV.

Gulli soundtracks his own exhibition with two evenings of music by a trio completed by Hilmar Órn Hilmarsson, on electronics and beats, and bassist Geirg Bjarnason. Percussionist Thordis Claessen joined in on the second night. After the event, Hilmar explained the precise mathematical structures of some of the music, and how it related to the exhibition, but to these untrained ears, the musicians turned in an entertaining and exhilarating performance that was bound together by those irresistible, up tempo disco beats that Hilmar is so brilliant at producing. Furthermore, you didn't need a PhD in higher mathematics to enjoy it... Some useful Websites include Þórður Órn Thoroddsen's [www.bibbey.is](http://www.bibbey.is); Gúlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson's [www.islandens.jpko/pko](http://www.islandens.jpko/pko); Bad Taste's [www.smeikleysa.com](http://www.smeikleysa.com) and [www.badtaste.dk](http://www.badtaste.dk); and [www.iceandculture.com](http://www.iceandculture.com).

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"War is something we all have within us as human beings," announces New York's Raz Mesinai, aka Badawi, speaking after a weekend that has seen a succession of suicide bombings in Jerusalem and renewed threats by Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon against the Palestinians. "The aspect of a warrior changing, a spiritual warrior who for a while killed people and then realises they can focus in a different direction – that really interests me. Violence is the easiest way to make a statement, and there's a lot of lazy people in the world. But sound can also be violent. I went to a psychic who told me that in my past life I was a priest who forced everyone to convert to my religion, and if they didn't I would destroy their cities with guns made of bass! I was like, yeah... I would do that! I'm not a completely peaceful person, I've got a lot of hostility to certain ideas and I get mad and I shout. Music can be that way, and it's great when violence is expressed in that form. I was really into hardcore, the more violent the better!"

The titles of Badawi's three RDR CDs to date, *Bedouin Sound Clash* (1998), *Jerusalem Under Fire* (1997) and the newly issued *Soldier Of Midian*, all take a warrior stance that sounds provocative enough in the wake of 11 September. The music itself is aggressive too; the first two records filled with righteous rattling drums striking through digdub loops and heavily processed vocals, while *Soldier Of Midian* explodes with Middle Eastern percussion, Persian horn samples and dulcimer licks played by an ensemble of genuine Middle Eastern musicians, then cut up with a major dose of studio technology.

Born in Jerusalem in 1973, to American and Israeli parents, Mesinai moved to New York City aged three, making periodic trips back to Israel. When he was seven, his grandmother took him on a trip to a Palestinian refugee camp on the Lebanese border, where he met Sufi Sheik Muhsin Hassan, who taught him "to play through sound and rhythm". It was there he first heard the frame drums used in the cir ceremony, triggering a lifelong obsession with rhythm that has so far encompassed Persian, Indian, Yemini, Moroccan and Afro-Cuban styles. Time spent with the nomadic Bedouin (from which the name 'Badawi' comes) in the Sinai desert as a child seems to have infected the young Mesinai with a musically nomadic style capable of moving through different terrains without ever losing itself.

Mesinai notes that the culture of violence that left the biggest mark on him was that of New York City, where, growing up in the early 1980s, he was also exposed to early Hip Hop culture: "I was a horrible breakdancer," he recalls, "but so into it, it was like angels to me: amazingly spiritual, like a trance

ceremony." Mesinai also wrote graffiti, using amongst others the tag 'Scrabin', after the early 20th century Russian mystic composer. Turned on to dub through his love of the instrumental side of electronica, he formed the duo Sub Cub with John Ward, releasing one CD, *Dancehall Malfunction*, on Asphodel in 1997, and became part of the downtown NYC scene around DJ Spooky, Olive and Byzar that was given tagged as 'Illicit' for a period in the mid 90s – a label he says that was as inevitable as it was meaningless.

Mesinai insists he remains interested in dance music, especially now that outgoing New York mayor Rudy Giuliani has tried to make dancing illegal in most of the city, but he has also pursued a parallel career in modern composition, culminating in the recently released *Before The Law*, a set of soundscapes inspired by Czech Jewish modernist writer Franz Kafka, issued as part of the Radical Jewish Culture series on John Zorn's Tzadik label. The tracks combine strings, percussion and piano into short blocks of sound that capture the mood and pace of Kafka's writing. Mesinai, who is also a writer, dates his obsession to telling musical stories without words to time spent studying as a child with New York orthodox Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, a master storyteller who dramatised his tales with a guitar. He's put out several other pieces of modern composition including *The Heretic Of Ether*, a CD which landed him a gig contributing to the soundtrack of horror film *Hellraiser 6*, along with his own tripped-out darkcore imaginary soundtrack, *The Unspeakable*.

Although Mesinai's work maintains strong connections to Jewish tradition, he's emphatic about the universal nature of what he's doing: "Badawi means 'desert dweller'. I wrote it as 'Badawi' because I wanted to keep it universal, open, like William Blake, as opposed to any particular tradition – a friend from Korea says the word means 'over water'." Perhaps because of the rich complexity of his background, Mesinai has managed to avoid making a "World Music" that just pastes together different musical styles in an exotic way. Noting that Kafka wrote his novel *Amerika* without ever actually visiting the continent, he views his own work as being based on the universality of sound, and of human experience. "Badawi is about whatever influences I've had in my life," he claims. "I want to perceive not even in a musical way that all people are vibrating, making these sounds in this desperate way, all over the world. I've heard a lot of music and grown up around a lot of types of music and started seeing resemblances. When I DJ, I'll take a ska track and some Hungarian gypsy music, and discover that they're both making similar sounds, with rhythms going 'umchuka umchuka'. And that raises the question: what's going on there? Rather than forcing

Hungarian music to sound like ska, it just does sound like ska, and vice versa."

Technology, used Badawi style, provides a set of experimental tools for opening lines of communication between different sound cultures from around the world, without smoothing them down into one bland 'global' mush. Walking across town to one of his *Tzadik* gigs, we discuss a mutual enthusiasm for American composer Charles Ives, whose Mesinai notes was 'sampling' American military marching band tunes and folk songs and mixing them up in modernist compositions at the beginning of the 20th century. When Mesinai spins, the resulting noise is often similar to Ives's exuberant, aggressive clashes of styles, but with the emphasis shifted to melody to rhythm: tabla thadowmelt into Burning Spear's Garvey's Ghost and King Tubby, Moroccan Gnawa rhythms, Nuyorican percussion workouts, and tracks from Soldier Of Midian, polyrhythms crashing into one another like waves. It's an intensely joyful sound, even if it predictably sends East Village cocktail sippers scurrying off to the bar.

Mesinai is also fascinated by the creative possibilities of the turntable (the married fellow turntablist/composer Marina Rosenfeld, featured in *The Wire* 23.3, at the very end of 2001), in the works for 2002 is a CD of string quartet pieces for Tzadik's Composers Series, which includes his *String Quartet For 4 Turntables*, premiered at Lincoln Center last year with Ol' Olive and Toshio Kajiwara. Mesinai doesn't subscribe to any traditional dichotomy between technologically and traditionally produced sounds. "I always start with acoustics," he says. "I believe that energy has to be put into the music, you have to be moving, you have to put energy in through the instruments. The problem with electronics is that often you're not putting enough energy through – you sit there more, you type. Turntables are actually the closest thing to a live instrument, and energy can be thrown through very nicely."

Even if, as philosopher Paul Virilio says, war is the essence of technology, Mesinai remains optimistic. "You need to know your enemy, and befriend him," he says. "If my enemy is electronics, then I need to befriend it. That's what the Badawi project is about. Machines processing traditions. When I was a child, my mother used to take me to the Sinai desert and I used to have these Japanese Transformer dolls that can transform into insects, they're these machine robots. So I'd sit out there in the desert, and there'd be Bedouins, and I had to entertain myself so I'd take out these Transformers and start up these total battlefields and I think of that when I do a Badawi track, these Transformers duking it out in the desert." □ *Badawi's Soldier Of Midian* is out now on RDR. Raz Mesinai's *Before The Law* is available on Tzadik



## Invisible Jukebox

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on – with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear

### Don Letts

Tested by Ben Watson. Photos by Mattias Ek

**Born in 1956 in the UK, Don Letts had privileged access to the world of ska and rocksteady; his father ran the Duke Letts sound system in London. In 1977, he found himself DJing at the Roxy, the premier punk venue, where he played reggae records – partly to cover for the fact that few punk records had actually been released yet. Although neither a musician nor a singer, he played a crucial role mediating between the two supposedly separate musical cultures, always finding himself in the right place at the right time. He made films – *The Punk Rock Movie* was shot at The Roxy on Super 8 – providing a rare visual record of the punk explosion. He briefly managed female punk group The Slits. He accompanied Johnny Rotten and Richard Branson to Jamaica to sign groups to Virgin's reggae subsidiary, Frontline. In 1984, he formed Big Audio Dynamite with Mick Jones from The Clash, fusing punk with reggae, funk and Go-Go according to a Hip Hop cut-up aesthetic. Recently, Letts went public with his role as selector to the punks and received much acclaim for the compilation *Dread Meets Punk Rockers Uptown*. Operating as the Dub Cartel, Letts and Dan Donovan recently 'reconstructed' Scientist's "Step It Up" on Select Cuts From Blood & Fire Volume 2 (Select Cuts). Letts is still making films. He has just finished the filming for a documentary on NYC punk and is currently re-editing a newly discovered videotape of Joe Strummer's abandoned black and white cine film *Hell W70*. The Jukebox took place at Letts's home in West London.**

**BIG YOUTH**

"TRAIN TO RHODESIA"  
FROM DREAD LOCKS DREAD RUOK! 1995

[Immediately] I don't need to hear any more! Big Youth, of course. What's funny is, for the life of me I can't remember the name of the track, it's off *Dread Locks Dread*, right... "Train To Rhodesia"?

**Yes.**

Do I take the cheque? You're doing it like Who Wants To Be A Millionaire. The first couple will be really easy, make me feel comfortable, then you'll fuck me. That's all right, it makes for interesting reading! Big Youth, man, what do you want to know about him? Basically, growing up black British and going up that road of assimilation – this is pre-Rasta, post-Bob Marley – because of the assimilation thing, trying to get on with your life, we were really going up this soul route. We were trying to be sophisticated blacks, man, you know what I mean? I was never really happy with that, because it started to cause a divide between the more coolie guys who couldn't talk English properly and the sophisticated soul guys. In the mid-70s there was stuff going off in America, Angela Davis. Those were my formative years. We were trying to find our own identity and we were that awkward thing, 'black British', and it wasn't until I heard reggae and Rasta and Bob Marley that I found, 'oh, this is where I am from'. Reggae was always around because of my father's sound system. After Jamaican independence in 1962, there was a euphoria, the music was good times, ska, more upbeat, celebratory. The hope which that suggested didn't manifest itself, and in the aftermath came rocksteady and the more militant stuff, which was what Big Youth came out of, whereby no longer are we singing about coconuts and donkeys, but more militant things like Marcus Garvey and Rastafari – addressing problems.

The music was about things I could relate to. It was a revelation for me. Before I was immersed in white culture, I'm not knocking that at all, there's a lot of great stuff I really love, but I wanted to know where I stood in the picture. It was through people like Big Youth, particularly Big Youth. You had U Roy and I Roy and they would talk about things, but Big Youth seemed to come across more militant and more cultural. They did the odd tune here and there, but Big Youth's thing was righteous, militant, spiritual, all those things in one. Very educational if you're black and British. The content was inspiring for a young black British kid trying to find his feet, and struggling with the duality of my existence, which was black and British. Funny enough, years later I got to meet Big Youth and got friendly with him through what happened when John Lydon took me to Jamaica

[Looks at album cover] Classic album! I wonder if I've still got my copy? Man, the whole imagery, the red, gold and green, the dreadlocks thing, Big Youth epitomised that for a British black kid looking for somebody, not to emulate, but to aspire to, something to claim as your own. Big Youth was the man – before Bob Marley.

**Yet he was a DJ rather than a singer**

Deepying is toasting, talking, MCing, then you have this thing called 'sing-singing', which was Big Youth did "Hit The Road, Jack". It means you can't sing, basically! But Big Youth had a likeable quality of its own. There are a lot of Jamaican singers who 'can't sing' – it's totally immaterial. Can James Brown sing? It's not the bloody point. The point is that his vocal tone, his delivery and subject matter with those beats worked.

**Did Big Youth inspire you to become a DJ yourself?**

Not really. I was working on the King's Road, Chelsea, back then. It didn't make me want to become a

musician per se, but it inspired me to do something. There were people who looked like me, with hair like me, basically from the same roots as me, achieving some kind of platform by which they could air their voices, their creativity. I think that filtered through to me, as opposed to 'I want to be a singer' – as anybody who knows Big Audio Dynamite will tell you, Don Letts is not a singer. Singay! Singay! Big Youth, U Roy, the magnificent three of Jamaica deepying.

**What was Big Youth like when you met him?**

Because I was with John [Lydon], whenever it was, 1979, they'd heard of this thing called punk rock, these crazy white baldheads as they called them. They didn't know what the fuck was going on, all they knew was that here was a white man who was 'doing well', and that was enough, all it needed. That got John through many a door. Once they got to know him, they also dug John's style, because he was a white rudeboy, he wasn't some arty-farty, art school... he didn't come across that way John was street and they could relate to that. The so-called DJs coming out of Jamaica now are culturally bankrupt. A lot of what I know about my own heritage, I learned directly from reggae music, coming from a time when it was about something. It seems to be going backwards now. There's the odd guy here and there saying something, but we've got a whole spate of guys now like Elephant Man, it's fucking terrible. There are certain homophobias things going on now. I've got no gay people humping me, I'm more likely to get shot by a black man!

It's devoid of any culture or spirituality right now. I've got two theories on it. One is that the drug culture has changed. Jamaica has become a route for cocaine into America and cocaine is off top end, weed is bottom end. And my other theory is technology. Reggae came out of this situation where people really didn't have the expertise to play these instruments. On a keyboard, you'd hold down a chord and transpose it, you can't help but come up with a skank, you move it from here to there. A guitar, the same thing – you'd hold the fret down and just skank. None of this Eric Clapton fluffy stuff. They've come up with their own invented style through their lack of musical ability. I don't think it works like that in Jamaica today. It seems to me that a badly programmed drum machine sounds like a badly programmed drum machine. Affordable technology... just because you can afford it don't mean you can do it. The downside of affordable technology is mediocrity. You can print that in big fucking type, I really believe that.

**Did you dislike Prince Jammy's "Sting Teng" rhythm?**

"Sting Teng" was good. Funny enough, I was going to say up till about "Sting Teng", in fact up till [Beenie Man & Chevelle Franklin's 1997] "Dance Hall Queen" [from the soundtrack to Letts's film *Dance Hall Queen*], they were using machines to create bass lines. That's cool, I don't care where it comes from as long as it's a kickin' bassline. But now, if you listen to a lot of the tunes that are coming out, do you realise that there's no bassline per se, not even a machine playing the bassline, it's all kickdrum? [Claps] That's where it lost me. Where there's no bass line, it ain't happening. You usually find that the stuff with no bass line is the stuff that is culturally and morally bankrupt, it ain't sayin' shit.

**THE 101ERS**

"JUNCO PARTNER"

FROM ELEVEN AVENUE BREAKDOWN (ANALOGUE) 1975

[Sings] "And he was loaded..." Hang on a minute. Is this The 101ers' version of "Junco Partner"? I know it from [The Clash's] Sandinista, a very underrated

# Invisible Jukebox

album, but I never heard this. I never saw The 101ers play. Sounds like the fucking [Notting Hill] Carnival. Strummer, what a man. Damn! There's a surprise, I'm a Clash man. This is really funky, this is brilliant, I thought it was The Clash live at first. When Joe met the Clash he must've brought this with him. The way The Clash recorded it was still very much this feel. It's funny you should pull this out. I saw Joe Strummer at the Bratton Academy last week and the whole house was rocking. He commands a lot of respect, Strummer. His words. His vocal style – singay! quite often you miss a lot of the words, but if you read the lyrics, his wordsmanship is superb. Strummer can say more in two sentences than some people can say in a whole album. [Listens] I also found an instrumental version of this, which I put over a thing called Hell WILO, which is a black and white crime film Strummer made when The Clash were off the road. It's a story set in West London. When he finished it he threw it away because he didn't like it. A couple of years ago some led came to me with a VHS copy which he'd found in a car boot sale. I remastered it with instrumental, and one of them is "Junco Partner". That's coming out next year, a Clash DVD.

I would love to have seen The 101ers. There's a documentary I made called *Westway To The World* and Paul [Simenon] describes seeing The 101ers, he makes it sound very funny. Apparently it was a collective of yoghurt weavers and soya munchers. He describes dogs running around the stage and hippies in overalls pogging. It sounds really weird, a long way from The Clash. "Keys To Your Heart" was The 101ers' first single, I used to play that at the Roxy along with the reggae, one of the few records I thought would fit the punk ethos. I do get a lot of credit for turning on the punks to reggae, but I've got to be very clear about this. People like John Lydon and Joe Strummer and Paul Simenon were well into it before Don Letts came along. Back in the day, at the Roxy, I was just playing some music I liked. Now, with hindsight, the punk-reggae connection is important, but at the time I was just doing my thing and it happened to connect with people. Now it's this "superstar DJ" thing when you put a fucking compilation album out. I didn't think selecting a bunch of good tracks was a big deal, so I was surprised at this response to *Dread Meets Punk Rockers* recently. People said it was because there was a story attached as opposed to it just being a compilation.

## THE ANGELIC UPSTARTS FEATURING ROY YOUNG "DIFFERENT STROKES"

FROM "DIFFERENT STROKES 7" SINGLE EMI 1982

Sounds like Joe singing again. No, it's not quite Strummer. It's reggae, but they're not Jamaican. African group? I haven't the faintest idea. [Looks at 7" single cover]

**It's The Angelic Upstarts**, recording a reggae song with a black singer called Roy Young. It pissed off their National Front fans.

I remember. There were certain bands out there where I just knew the name and that was it. Then I turn the sleeve over, and the producer is Dennis Bovell, an old mate of mine. When the punk thing happened I was aware of bands that seemed to be courting the National Front following or if the line was in any way blurred, my brain just automatically shut off. My brain space is very valuable. Your bullshit detector was quite finely tuned. You automatically avoided things like... I'm not saying The Angelic Upstarts, but anything that was missing around the fringes. Where are The Angelic Upstarts now? I must admit I don't like this, though it must've been a brave and bold move to issue

this. When the whole Two Tone thing was going off, certain factors in that, it all got a bit weird. Again, my brain just switched off. I thought, if they can't work it out, I'd shit in them. I was too busy going forward to work out their shit for them.

**For us outside London scene, the swastika thing and punk was confusing. That happened at the Roxy didn't it?**

The swastikas emerged briefly and were squashed just as quickly, through people like The Clash. Maybe they talk about it in my documentary, saying, "Hey, you don't want to play around with stuff you don't understand". Youth! What are you going to do with it? The blind energy of youth, it makes those kind of social faux pas every now and then. The good outweighs the bad. I look at things I've done which are embarrassing, but you learn, don't you? I prefer the kind of blind energy of youth that makes a few mistakes as opposed to armchair philosophy where you don't fuck all because you can reason yourself out of never getting out of your chair. I didn't really like that record, but the point was still made.

## London UNDERGROUND "STRANGE THINGS" / "CONSPIRACY" FROM 10" DISCO PLATE (ON U SOUNDS) 1982

Obviously English. I've no idea who it is. [Shows cover] On-U Sound! Essentially though to Adrian Sherwood and the whole On-U thing. This isn't Mark Stewart singing, is it? Yes it is, here he is on the back cover, a young Mark Stewart. I guess this is early in the day when Adrian and those guys were working their shit out. They obviously got it together big time in the end. Adrian is fantastic at production. I liked Little Axe and he was with Primal Scream, but I like him best with his abstract reggae, African Headcharge. Mark Stewart was in The Pop Group, amazing band. "We Are All Prostitutes" – amazing tracks that should be reassessed, Magged or Wived or whatever. Big seminal things which aren't appreciated. Gareth Sager and Mark Stewart, Rip Rig & Panic with Neneh Cherry. It's a crime that they're written out of the whole punk story. This single sounds like formative days. Adrian did a lot of work with Prince Far I, Dub Encounters. Having said all that, I don't like this track! Interesting for 30 seconds. Next track?

## PRINCE FAR I "VIRGIN"

FROM 10" DISCO PLATE (ON U SOUNDS) 1982

[Comments on phone ringing intro] It's not the beginning of Once Upon A Time In America, I know that. [Prince Far I's vocal stars] That's so funny. I knew Prince Far I really well. I loved Prince Far I. May he rest in peace. Branson is a prick with no place on my plate? An attack on Branson, very funny. So the punk-reggae thing has taken off, and Richard Branson and whatever other bright spark at Virgin think, "We'll get on the reggae train, we'll go to Jamaica and sign up these artists". A lot of these Jamaican artists, they're consummate rude boys – Prince Far I, Tapper Zukie, Keith Hudson. They're all dead now except for Tapper. Virgin sign them, all of whom I knew. You catch these guys on an off day and it's scary. They had a different way of settling their business, do you know what I mean?

This record was a result of Far I falling out with Virgin, obviously. Keith Hudson would go in there and threaten to kill everybody. It's hard to explain. They weren't bad people, but they were hard characters. They had a different way of dealing with people. It all went pear-shaped for Virgin very quickly. Over here, they'd fall into some Jamaican dialect, and they might just be saying 'good morning', but the record company

would be totally intimidated. It wasn't your clean cut soul boys from America, it was a totally different quantity. For I used to play Dingwals all the time, one of the punks' favourites. Under Heavy Manners, his album title, became a slogan and a tagline. The Clash used quote often.

I knew all these guys, I think because of my profile with the punk thing – Dan Lurts, he must be the man. Wend, riggie got me into the punks and the punks got me closer to the reggae acts, although meeting people who've made music is not necessarily a good thing, in fact, most times, it's the worst thing you could ever do. But respect to Mr Branson, the man who took it to Jamaica, I love him I used to play Far I's "Deck Of Cards" at the Roxy. That voice, Rockstone delivery, it sounds like he gargled with bleach.

## BAD BRAINS

"SAILIN' ON" / "RALLY ROUND JAH JAH THRONIE"  
FROM ROCK FOR LIGHT (ABSTRACT) 1983

There's something interesting about the guy's vocal, it's familiar. It's funny, this could be really old or, like, tomorrow, with all the stuff going on in America, I give up.

**It's 1983, New York. The singer was like a young, black Iggy Pop.**

It's not Bad Brains, is it? I'm aware that they're part of the story, but I never knew them. I knew they were lively, very energetic. I respect them, but I never got into them. The so-called punky-reggae party was very one way. Certain punk bands played reggae, but the traffic didn't really go the other way. There weren't many black groups, reggae groups, who were influenced by punk at all. But if people want to cite one, it'd have to be Bad Brains – the only one. The most that reggae got from punk was exposure as support acts. Steel Pulse toured with The Sits, for example, but they very much stuck to their reggae roots. Bad Brains – 'nuff respect, but they never did anything for me.

## VIVIEN GOLDMAN

"LAUNDERETTE"

FROM VARIOUS ARTISTS (CDMMA) EARLY 80S

I know this. It's not Vivien Goldman, is it? They had a group with whistling noise, the guy with the glasses who plays kiddie instruments...

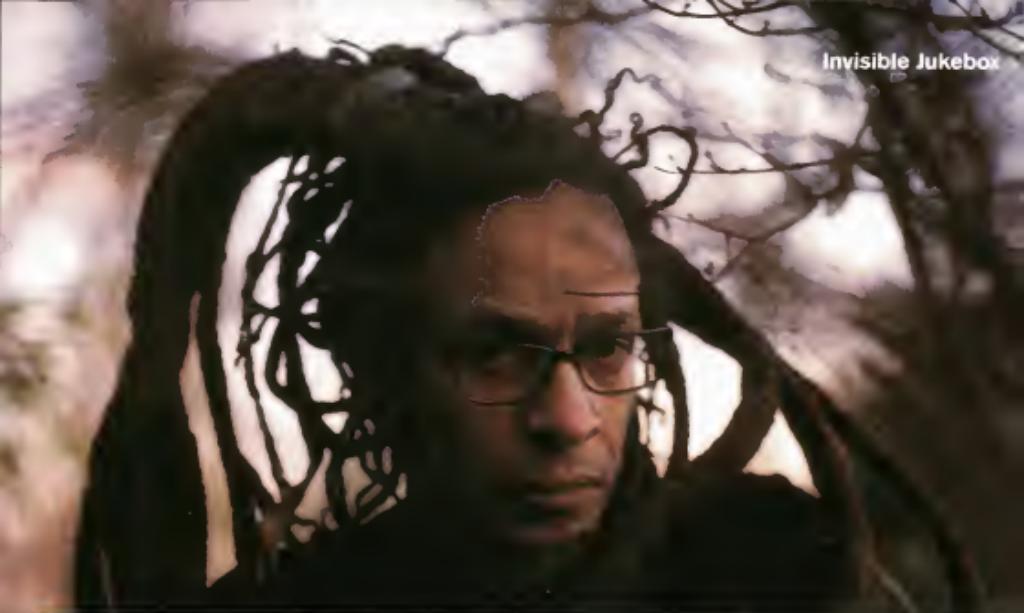
## Steve Beresford?

Steve Beresford, thank you. I saw Vivien recently. Obviously we share a history. She's still out there writing lyrics for certain groups. I never saw this. What was the single that was a hit?

**"Money" by The Flying Lizards?**

Yes. I did like this, it was a single wasn't it? It's Silly this, isn't it? The Sits, Vivien, Neneh Cherry, the Bristol contingent there was a whole thing going on – Rip Rig & Panic, Pigbag, Gareth Sager, somebody get a story out of this man! They were more jazzy, freeform, intellectual, that whole collective. I've got to say, I've never been a jazz man per se. I dig the romantic ambience, I like it in soundtracks, but I don't sit at home listening to jazz. I understand, say, Ernest Ranglin's musical virtuosity, but the music has never hit me. Maximum respect for Vivien Goldman, trooper, original trooper. Like Carolin Coon, who had her roots in hardcore 60s politics.

Caroline Coon gave an interesting talk at a conference on Punk in Wolverhampton recently. She said that The Pistols and The Clash screwed everything up in the end because they were drunk all the time. Working for release, she realised that if you're going to fight drug laws and get people out of jail, you couldn't be off your head all the time.



Did she say that? It's a creative paradox, that contradiction. A lot of creativity comes out of madness like that. I think it's part of the 'blind energy of youth' argument. If they'd been smart enough to work that out, then they wouldn't have made the fucking music they were making. There is a tendency for people to say 'what went wrong?' about something when it doesn't go on for ages, and I never thought that longevity was the point. I've been a lucky man in my lifetime, I've always managed to be in the right place at the right time. London 77, punk rock. I'm in New York in 1980, 1981, when the whole HipHop thing was breaking out. I'm in Washington when the whole Go-Go thing was happening. Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers, a 'call and response' thing, the audience is part of the band, incredible shit. "Drop The Bomb" by Trouble Funk, what a track. The Junkyard Band'

#### COLD CUT

"SAY KIDS (WHAT TIME IS IT?)"

FROM VARIOUS. NO RIGHTS GIVEN OR IMPLIED. THE ORIGINAL SAMPLES ARE 1987.

This is Coldcut. Their shit was cool. What are they doing now? Didn't they start getting into computer games and soundtracks, they started to digress into other 'media', man, and they've lost the groove. Yes, get back in the fucking studio and just make some madid! You start to collaborate with these things and they eat away at the soul because their motivation is not the same as your motivation. Video games. There's too much interaction with the establishment now, they should cut that shit off. [Coldcut drop in a piece of Go-Go/Latin cowbell percussion] Classic sample! We'd do this stuff in BAD, nick samples and loop them. Coldcut do it very well, probably better than anyone else, but as time has told, you can only make one or two albums doing that, then you've got to go somewhere else. I wouldn't mind having this CD. Can I

nick it? This sample is from a Grandmaster Flash track - find 2D great records and nick all the best bits. I've got to say, a lot of people could try doing this and make a fucking mess. These guys put it together good. That's Malcolm McLaren, "Double Dutch". Classic. Coldcut are really good thieves, nothing wrong with that. [Examines CD] This is weird, this isn't even on a label, is this some kind of weird limited edition? [Takes CD and places it into his computer drive] It'll be less limited after I rip it onto my laptop!

#### RHYTHM & SOUND WITH TIKIMAN "NEVER TELL YOU"

FROM SHOWCASE BUREAU, MJD 1999

Wow! Man, you're playing my boy Tikiman. What's the posse called, Rhythm &... [snaps fingers] Rhythm & Sound. I love that! The partner in my sound system is Dan Donovan, he used to be in BAD. He turned me onto this posse, as well as this label called Basic Channel, there's a lot of this Techno/dub stuff coming out of Germany, very authentic. Why Germany? The irony is fucking unbelievable. I don't know that much about them, except there's this whole school, Maunz. I got this about three weeks ago, love this. **Can you hear this on radio?**

Maybe late night, specialist shows, it's not a daytime vibe. What's funny about stuff like this is that there's a way it gets to the people it's supposed to get to. It's part of this aethereal music internet, not that thing [points to his laptop] but a human thing. I actually believe in that. Somehow, we're supposed to hear this. Obviously, some people will miss out, but I've got it and I'll pass it on to people. It's a musical college of knowledge that operates outside of the norm. It operates a split of the norm. Rhythm & Sound have got several releases, in fact Dan just played another one the other day, this sort of abstract club, it's a head trip. What I like about dub is that there's space

for you to put some of yourself in there. It doesn't swamp you. Sometimes music takes up too much of you, and it's nice to have music which is captivating and ignorable at the same time. Dub is my thing. I was with Dan last night, doing a remix thing for this label called Select Cuts - German label, again, weird thing going on in Germany. It's this old school dub system kind of vibe, very minimal. I think it's coming out of their Techno, and it has a very low key vibe. It's not like benging in the middle of the floor.

#### DJ SCUD

"TOTAL DESTRUCTION (DUB)"

FROM THREE TIME HARD WAY WITH DJ SCUD/BOMBARDIER/W/M/O ICH/955 PAGE ENTERTAINMENT 2001

This sounds like Dan Donovan stuff. This is one of those tracks that makes me realise that I'm 45. Who is this?

#### DJ Scud

They play a lot of this stuff on the pirates. It sounds like Jungle meets The Aphex Twin. What's with the new Aphex fucking thing? It's a long way from bloody Selected Works...!

#### Are people dancing to this stuff?

Yes, people dance to this shit. It's a whole other scene. What they're on - I don't want! It's cool. Do you understand when I say music is like language? You might not understand what I'm saying, but it doesn't mean that I'm not saying something. This is an outlet for somebody. As it goes, I don't like this, but that's irrelevant. What's interesting about jungle and break-step is that they still used the MC vocal style. I liked this shit when it started, Leviticus, Roni Size, Bukem. What do they call this? To me, it comes out of Jungle, but they'd probably say, "it's not Jungle!" I prefer something more organic, something with a baseline. Dread Meets Punk Rockers Uptown, with tracks selected by Don Letts, is out now on Heavenly



# DECODING SOCIETY

**BY THE TIME  
CABARET  
VOLTAIRE  
SIGNED TO A  
MAJOR LABEL IN  
1983, THEIR  
MUSIC WAS  
ALREADY  
MUTATING FROM  
THE INDUSTRIAL  
NOISE OF THEIR  
EARLY YEARS  
INTO A NEW  
SPECIES OF  
PROTO-  
SAMPLING  
ELECTRONIC  
BODY MUSIC  
TRADING BEATS  
WITH THE  
EMERGING  
CHICAGO HOUSE.  
KEN HOLLINGS  
ANALYSES KIRK  
& MALLINDER'S  
VIRGIN YEARS**

Events move faster as they recede from the present. Time collapses. Moments elide. Midway through 2003, in a scantly accurate reconstruction of Manchester's Hacienda club, created for Michael Winterbottom's film *24 Hour Party People* – about the life and death of Factory Records' legendary social space – Richard H Kirk stands gazing at the stage, where two young actors are busy being Cabaret Voltaire for the cameras. Judging by the sparse crowd of kids watching, the scene reflects a moment from Fact 51's earlier existence (the nightclub was assigned its own number in the Factory catalogue), when it was still less of a building than a barely inhabited floor plan, a design waiting to be executed. Back then, Cabaret Voltaire were completely at home in its hedonistic severity. They were actually the first group ever to perform live there, playing the club's opening night on 21 May 1982. Associations and connections have shifted in this historical recreation of the Hacienda's early days, however. The song being performed by the movie version of Cabaret Voltaire is "Sex Money Freaks", a track taken from their 1987 album *Code*. By the time of its release, the nature of electronic dance music and the people responding to it, especially in the Hacienda, had altered radically. Cabaret Voltaire suddenly found themselves strangers in a strange land they had originally helped uncover, and their reputation suffered accordingly. The innovative and genuinely subversive dance beats Cabaret Voltaire laid down during those missing years between 1982 and 87 have been dropped from the picture.

Now, with the appearance of *Conform To Reform*, a four CD box set containing rare and unreleased material predominantly cut from this period, plus *The Original Sound Of Sheffield 83-87*, a compilation of original Cabs 12" mixes available for the first time, that critical deficit can finally be addressed. Indeed, a whole squad of studio innovators, including Derrick May, Orbital's Paul and Phil Hartnoll, Tom Rowlands of The Chemical Brothers and Warp Records founder Steve Beckett, have already come forward to acknowledge Cabaret Voltaire as an influence. "I think we condescended after the record has come out," Stephen Mallinder observed to journalist Paul Morley back in November 1980, when the group was still a trio comprising himself, Chris Watson and Richard Kirk, and the Hacienda had yet to be built. "A lot of the things that we've done make a lot more sense after we've done them." Film sets, however authentic, are just the stiff ghosts left by lived experience. As the camera travels across the Hacienda's failed dancefloor to where the real Richard H Kirk stands among The Cabs' recreated audience, this is perhaps a good moment to remember that history is only ever rewritten. Nothing is as you left it.

Time was when Cabaret Voltaire's very name stood for the artless chaos that conceals art. As an independent group operating through Rough Trade from 1978-82, 'The Cabs', as they came to be known, conformed pretty well to the solid platitudes that punk had coalesced into. The NME could even praise them as "an original punk band made good", but the sense of relief that accompanied such an assertion came a little too close to the surface on occasion. It seemed impossible to write a profile of Kirk, Mallinder and Watson without mentioning how approachable they were, so completely unlike their image as aloof grey manufacturers of musical elitism. If the group came across as friendly and unassuming, their music during this period did not: a bleak expression of overload, distortion and decay, such releases as *Voice Of America* (1980), the three-part "Sluggin' For Jesus" (released on Crepusculo 1.2's between 1981-83) and *Red Mecca* (1981) gave noisy celebration to the corruption of meaning; the sound of signals feeding back on themselves.

Cabaret Voltaire had successfully exploited the faults opening up in musical form due to the increasing availability of cheap electronic keyboards, rhythm machines and processors, but it was difficult to grasp what that achievement entailed. The subject kept slipping away, partly because the equipment The Cabs were using could not answer for itself. The raw exposed aesthetic of punk, its wild drive towards demystification, could never fully accommodate the boxes, leads and connectors behind modern electronic music. Besides, as Kirk and Malinder had both come to realise by the time Chris Watson decided to curb the group in 1982, cutting edge sound technology meant dancefloor technology. "The technological breakthrough and the most radical music," Richard Kirk recalls, "were both coming out of the dance scene." Fancy gizmos like the sequencer, the harmoniser, the Claptrap and the digital delay were all about making funky things to play with, offering the perfect expression of how art and dance were perceived as being mutually exclusive opposites. "Fuck art, let's do dance," the T-shirts on sale in Soho's Old Compton Street used to read, but first, they implied, let's make a deal.

When Cabaret Voltaire's *The Crackdown* came out on Virgin in 1983, it was clear that things had moved on. Kirk had already observed that, with Watson's departure for a full time job as a TV sound recordist, Cabaret Voltaire was "less a group and more like a business partnership" – and they now had the corporate logo to prove it. Designed by 1980s typographic visionary Neville Brody, Cabaret Voltaire's elegant 'CV' chevron meant business. Simple, direct and easily identifiable, it was a sure sign that something had changed. Encouraged by entrepreneurial berserker Steve, whose company Some Bizzare had mastered the art of the early 1980s music desk, Kirk and Malinder had refined their strengths, redefined their roles and started to strip back their sound. It was Steve who offered to broker a contract with Virgin Records that would allow The Cabs access to 24 track recording facilities in London, the services of a good producer and possible crossover into the rapidly growing dance market. He would also come up with the funding required to set up their independent video label, Doubtlession. All he asked in return was that the vocals, formerly strained and filtered into harsh declamations when run through the desk back at Western Works, The Cabs' home studio in Sheffield, become a little more prominent and a little less processed.

Through such simplicity, however, comes a new diversity. Just as Andy Warhol constantly jugged the geometric relationship of the hammer and sickle in his 1976 series of paintings inspired by the Soviet Union's original brand identity, so Brody reworked the CV insignia into different configurations on *The Crackdown's* sleeve design. Beneath the bland, impulsive authority of the corporate logo, Cabaret Voltaire's spirit of creative disarray was still at work. It was there in the hand-retouched photographic image painter Phil Barnes had supplied for the album's cover. Showing Kirk and Malinder jointly operating a video camera system, its lines and colour fields have been rendered in a high contrast style, strongly reminiscent of the soft-sensitised pictures often used in the late 60s and early 70s to sell all-purpose strangeness to the mainstream. Solanum, a photograph rendered its reality harshly altered, recognisable yet unknowable, preparing the public for everything from The Beatles' psychedelic period to the Switched On Rock collection and Martin Denny's Exotic Moog. It helped reverse perceptions, unspeakable opinions.

Starting with the skeletal funk of its opening cut '24-24', *The Crackdown* presents the 1980s as the screened down oppressive nightmare it actually was,

rather than the glossy playground of surplus values fondly remembered by today's media. This is, after all, the decade that brought you AIDS, crack cocaine and the free market economy, although not necessarily in that order. It was also the era in which, as writer Mick Farren later commented, "drugs brought money back and Reagan was elected president and shit went on. In fact, that's the sad part: hippies survived Nixon, but punk caved in to Ronald Reagan, know what I'm saying? Punk couldn't actually take a good challenge."

Perhaps it couldn't deal with the challenge head on, but it knew how to take that sense of stiff opposition to a different arena. Assisted by drummer Alan Fish and Soft Cell's Dave Ball, with producer Flood at the desk, *The Crackdown's* streamlined rhythmic assault itself to an emergent culture in which the 12", the mixing desk and the dancefloor had become new platforms of expression. In this respect, Cabaret Voltaire were one of the few groups who understood that going into a club and starting to dance could both be political acts. With its use of edited tapes featuring the voices of black American convicts describing prison experience, its fractured sequencers, harsh electronic handclaps and Matt's seething vocal delivery, '24-24' is a dark reflection of the enclosed technological environment fostered by the Western political economy, where the money markets, data flows and media entertainment were beginning to feed into each other. This was the lightless electronic cage in which humanity, increasingly becoming convinced that it had ceased to exist ideologically, would be forced to occupy (today, we barely even notice the bars).

Free to concentrate upon its vocals in what had evolved into a more formally structured working relationship, Malinder delivered texts that haunted, nagged and probed at the listener. His urgent whispering became an ambiguous corner signal, offering a point of contact with an actual flesh and blood performer while simultaneously hinting that all was not well on the streets of Technopolis. "It's just a try to hold you down," Matt states repeatedly on "Talking Time", while a vocoder chorus swirls around the back of the mix and a synthetic voice remorselessly counts off the track's five minute duration. Through the interplay of those three voices, bringing the artificial, the processed and the real into tense proximity with each other, "Talking Time" was a pioneering slice of electronics, suggesting ways in which studio technology could communicate directly with the dancefloor in a voice that was both alien and familiar. When New York rap act Whodini released "Five Minutes Of Funk" in 1984, blending expressive electric beats and an arid, computer generated countdown with a searching freestyle lyrical flow, it was clear that someone had been listening.

Chris Watson's departure from the group, together with Steve's intervention in their business affairs, may have acted as catalysts for CV's redefinition and crossover, but an interest in the possibilities of that change was already establishing itself. Back in 1982, word came from New York that John Robie, who had worked with Afrika Bambaataa and Arthur Baker on the electric funk classic "Planet Rock", was interested in remaking "Yeshe", from The Cabs' 2x45 EP on Rough Trade, for possible release on the Tommy Boy label. "I love this track, but you guys don't know what you're doing here," Robie told Kirk and Malinder. "Let me remix it." Reluctant to have him remodel something from their back catalogue, CV offered Robie two specially recorded tracks to work with, "Diskone" and "Get Level", which he rejected outright, describing them as "new wave disco" rather than the pared down dance number he had in mind.

What lay behind Robie's discernment was an awareness of how the 12" format could extend the structures and broaden the dynamics of dance music

After the great vinyl and petroleum shortages of the mid-70s, resulting in the kind of rigid industry standards that punk had rebelled against, the market was awash with a flood of the stuff. By 1980, records were available in just about every shape, size and colour, but it was the newly popularised 12" single, with its running time of eight to ten minutes, that was the most exciting. As its title suggests, 2x45 was an early experiment in putting this template to use. Through his two remixes of "Yeshe", eventually released on Factory, Robie took that experimentation to the next stage. "What Robie did with that track," Kirk explained, "showed us what the possibilities of 12" mixes were. You could strip back the music to its basic elements and it would work better in a club. Maybe some of the early Cabaret stuff was just too full, too cluttered, to work properly in clubs, but when you start to strip the clutter away it becomes much more user friendly. It was a big underground dance hit."

The 12" dance mix hinted at luxury and excess, the hi-tech seduction of the club sound system and a lifestyle tailored for people who could either afford to stay up all night or simply didn't have a job worth getting up for next morning. The trouble was finding this kind of material in your local Megastore. Grace Jones came close with her cover of Joy Division's "She's Lost Control", New Order's "Blue Monday" achieved iconic status, while George Clinton upped the ante with stomping 12" versions of "Atomic Dog" and "Loopydoo" from his Computer Games project, as well as his Sly Stone collaboration on "Hydraulic Pump Squad, Pt 1.3", whose pre-eminence on the dance scene was only curtailed by severe distribution problems. When CV moved to Virgin it was with the firm understanding that they would be allowed to put out 12" remixes of individual album tracks.

*The Crackdown* was preceded onto the floor by sophisticated, dance-oriented mixes of "Fascination" and "Crackdown", two of its standout cuts, released back to back on the same disc. Produced by John Luongo, who had previously worked with The Jacksons, Gladys Knight and Blancmange, both of these bass-heavy workouts built confidently upon the smooth, freeflowing structures Flood's careful engineering had revealed in CV's new sound. From the brooding and staccato holding pattern maintained by the bass synth on "Fascination" to the incisive keyboard call signs at the closing of "Crackdown", Kirk and Malinder had fashioned a skilful restatement of space, order and purpose. Compared with other compositions on *The Crackdown*, such as "In The Shadows", which sounded like it was defining itself as it went along, as if the future were only a few hesitant seconds ahead, it was the 12" releases from this period that capitalised most upon CV's growing sense of rhythmic certainty.

In music, 'crossover' is ultimately a technological issue: finding the right tools for the right job. Certain pieces of studio equipment offer direct access from one set of attitudes to another. The Claptrap, a compressed synthetic version of the handclapping found on every rock or pop record in the mood to party, was also an electric staple. The harmoniser, a means of digitally weakening an off-key passage, could be used to bend and blend just about anything, allowing New Wave guitar dissonance to exist over the edgy measured flow of the sequencer. Industrial funk, from Throbbing Gristle's last London and San Francisco performances to A Certain Ratio and 23 Skidoo, was a snap-on reality. Most of these applications stretched sound, allowing them to occupy greater structural space, thereby opening up new musical forms. Precise electronic repetition encouraged a lack of focus, especially in funk and disco tracks, where sounds became increasingly layered, texts more allusive and hypnotic. Similarly Cabaret Voltaire constructed songs that were no more

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**'MAYBE  
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MUCH MORE  
USER  
FRIENDLY'  
- RICHARD  
H KIRK**

about any one subject than a night spent channel-hopping on TV, tuning through the shortwave radio dial or watching a sequence of advertising hoardings from the window of a speeding car could ever be. "It was more about creating atmosphere," Kirk comments about their cut up method of setting voices snatched from the mediascape against Mai's vocals.

With the introduction of the Fairlight Emulator (the first sampling keyboard), first used by CV on their 1984 *Microphones* LP, this complex interplay of words and meanings could be achieved with higher levels of precision. Whereas found material previously had to be edited together on magnetic tape, then dropped into the track with no guarantee of accuracy, its digital rendering could go exactly where it was sent. Context and content were thrown into sharp conflict with each other. A good example of this process was the 12" mix of "Sensona". Originally recorded as part of the *Microphones* session, it took on a life of its own when refashioned for the dancefloor. Over twitchy, nerveless beats, an unidentified speaker offers a series of mushy-mouthed commands: "Always work. Go to church. Respect those in authority over you. Do right. Do right." In a grim reversal of funk's standard commands to get down and party, "Sensona" presented redneck America's party line on clean living, lifted from a television documentary on the Ku Klux Klan. Set against it, to deepen the conceptual irony further still, were the chants of Zulu singers. From "Do the Mussolini (Head Kick)" back in 1978 right through to 1987's "Don't Argue", expressions of negative authority were a Cabaret Voltaire trademark. Offering instructions to some impossibly dangerous dance, they locked step with the state of the nation. "Sensona" reflected the group's experiences while touring the UK during the 1984 miners' strike. Riot police and official checkpoints were the frontline of a regime that no longer believed in society and had no further use for surplus flesh or the dignity of labour. Dance had become a form of hard work.

It was, however, the video camera, displayed like a trophy on the cover of *The Crackdown*, which became CV's key piece of crossover technology. As a cipher for electronica's unapproachable strangeness, here was a black box adept at explaining itself, whose guerrilla skirmishes with mass telecommunications revolved entirely around questions of demystification. Cabaret Voltaire's Doublevision label – run from a Nottingham address by Paul Smith, who later founded Blast First – offered freedoms hard to appreciate by today's standards. Until the moral panic over video nasties whipped through the industry in 1984, releases on video tape were largely free from scrutiny, making free market issues of censorship, classification and copyright largely irrelevant. Cut-ups, hardcore sex and anatomical surgery, audiovisual montages, overlays and pointed juxtaposition were all up for grabs, allowing CV to experiment with various formats including the video promo clip and their own TV *Wipeout* magazine. The videocassette's longer playing time also offered more scope (CDs still being far from standard issue) for extended musical structures. The frozen ambience of CV's video soundtracks, such as "Automotivation" and "Slow Boat To Thassos" from 1985's *Gasoline* in Your Eye release, foreshadow Techno's exploration of cinematic dimensions, as does "Lost Possibilities Of Modern Dreams", specifically created to accompany a 1983 sequence of Phil Barnes's paintings captured on videotape.

Even with such compositions as "Doublevision" and "Theme From Earthshaker", a brief musical trailer for an unrealised sci-fi film project, available on vinyl, misunderstandings still occurred. There is a story, for example, that when the densely overlaid optical assault of the first Cabaret Voltaire video was sent to the relevant executive at Virgin Records, it was immediately returned with an apologetic note saying that the



finished product had obviously been damaged during processing, so could they possibly film another one? A cheque was enclosed to cover production costs.

*Driving Gasoline*, a 12" EP issued simultaneously with *Gasoline In Your Eye*, marked Cabaret Voltaire's return to the harsher, more jagged sound of their Western Works studio in Sheffield. With Flood as engineer and producers like Luongo and John "Toxie" Potokar handling remixes, CV's overall approach to melody and rhythm had been greatly enhanced, but the full extent of this change only became apparent when Kirk and Mallinder took total control of the desk again for their 1985 LP, *The Covenant, The Sword And The Arm Of The Lord*. Recorded relatively quickly at Western Works, following a protracted stay in the United States, *The Covenant...* was an impassioned burst of static white noise and a near perfect expression of CV's interventionist aesthetics. Packaged in a Brady-designed sleeve incorporating frames taken from some 8mm footage Kirk and his wife had filmed at a San Francisco shooting range, it was a savage revelation of how the communications media had evolved into a weapons delivery system. Just as Brady's graphics aligned the split semicircles of the Pentax camera lens with the assassin's telescopic crosshairs, so the aggressive, stabbing electronics on "L21ST", with its layered bass patterns and nagging synthetic percussion, meshed with a heightened sense of cultural paranoia. Named after a 100-strong Christian survivalist group, whose stockpile of guns and explosives, together with anti tank missiles and quantities of cyanide intended for the water supply of an unnamed city, had been raided by the FBI in April of that year, *The Covenant, The Sword And The Arm Of The Lord* was a summation of 1980s dark erotica. A core belief of CV was that Western society was facing a "coming war" brought about by economic collapse, famine and rioting; it was time to take up arms against the godless pornographers, the anarchist street gangs and the racially inferior that threatened to tear civilisation apart. Such views were encouraged by a police state that fostered crisis as a means of social control.

Drawing upon the words of American televangelists using the networks as their ministry, Charles Manson being interviewed about his music, an instructor offering targeting advice on the shooting range and a porn star going for the money on "Warm", *The Covenant...* mapped out the psychic dimensions and increasingly embattled media terrain. In a culture no longer interested in following lines of argument, it obsessively explored the singularities, paradoxes and contradictions of mass communication, forcing information into inadvertently exposing its own inner workings. Adding extra punch to the bruising cyberfunk of "Kirkback" and "Whip Blow", was Cabaret Voltaire's recently acquired sampler. Instead of hiring a Fairlight in the hour, along with a programmer, as on the Microphones sessions, they could now integrate soundbytes and random streams of interference more intimately into each new track. As a consequence the raw intricacies to be discovered on "Golden Haloes" and "The Web" still repay close attention, while in the

jarring attack of "I Want You" the words that once formed the basic unit of meaning for just about every pop song in existence are skillfully exposed as the utterance of a TV preacher calling his faithful viewers to prayer. At the same time the open dissimilation of digital technology represented a complex moment of transition in which Cabaret Voltaire ran the risk of no longer appearing so strange a proposition. With the recorded sound hoards of the entire world ready to be aped, adapted and plundered, the electronic need not necessarily appear exotic any more. The data storm raging through *The Covenant, The Sword And The Arm Of The Lord* was clearing the way for a more radically altered order of experience than any survivalist could ever have dreamed of.

The sampler layered and crowded audio data into new densities – it had no choice. In this respect, albums like Public Enemy's 1988 *Iakes A Nation Millions To Hold Us Back* and Keith LeBlanc's 1988 *Mighty Malfuncton* were patched into the same circuit as *The Covenant, The Sword And The Arm Of The Lord*. One major difference, however, was Kirk and Mallinder's initial hesitancy over sampling other people's grooves for funkier effects. At a fundamental level, Cabaret Voltaire were still a group and maintained a group's interest in producing their own music. But finally, an awareness of how dated their drum machines were going to sound finally caused them to plunder loops and breakbeats as the 1980s started winding to a close. Reaction times were becoming crucial: even the role of the safety pin as fashion accessory had shifted. Pinned to a black MA1 jacket in a club, it signified that the wearer practised safe sex, as opposed to propagating punk's diseased state.)

By the time, Chicago House, a music created using nothing but electronic media, had already been spreading its message to a growing and enthusiastic congregation since 1985. An exuberant, hi-tempo energy flow, House was a collective embrace that did not rely upon the visibility of its creators to provide a focus. The reclusive anonymity of Chicago House and Detroit Techno allowed the producer and DJ to fashion themselves as futuristic engineers, the designers and architects of the new metropolis. By contrast, *The Covenant...* presented Kirk and Mallinder as anchormen for Apocalypsy TV, talking straight to camera and speaking in tongues. Even remixed, a track like "The Web", for all its technical derring, was never going to be House. Much of its drive came directly from the clenched, frenetic spasms of rock, concerned giddily with the essential business of concentrating effort into motion. House was post-industrial – it replaced work. It didn't crowd in on all sides with activities.

At the same time, CV's influence on the growing House scene cannot be overstated. For many, they still represented what Derrick May has described as "the mystique of what electronic music was supposed to be and how it was supposed to be presented. Everybody from Frankie Knuckles to Ron Hardy, young black DJs in Detroit, and Richie Hawtin, loved Cabaret Voltaire." Cabaret Voltaire knew enough about the

technology of dance to meet up with the producers of House and Techno and share ideas.

The crossover was having a different effect on the dancefloor, however. The mutated funk and dance beat dub of the Faucheur/St Che/Gary Chail collective, with Keith LeBlanc and Adrian Sherwood at the controls, was awakening clubbers' interest in what lay beyond electro and Hip-Hop. DJs at the Hacienda were throwing more House into the mix, Ecstasy was inc: the awareness boosted by fracture and paranoia was out. "All of a sudden these people were nice and passive," Kirk recalls. "They weren't going out smashing windows and protesting about things any more. They just wanted to party, and things have been going downhill ever since." The haunted urban soul of Cabaret Voltaire's "Don't Argue", the opening track on the 1987 *Code* album (EMI), suddenly sounded out of place. Using stern-toned words of advice lifted from a 1945 US army training film, *Your Job in Germany*, designed to teach GIs how to behave in occupied territory, "Don't Argue" ran counter to the prevailing mood of loved-up euphoria. "You will not be friendly," commanded this new voice of negative authority. "You will be aloof... watchful... suspicious." Blisssed out and ready to hug anything in sight, the Stepford Ravers would have a hard time getting their heads around a message like that. Produced with Adrian Sherwood, *Code* was a digital deconstruction of modern society that revealed the armed state of siege at its heart. Gun references predominated, viral infections and data plagues vibrated through each track. If anyone threw their hands in the air on one of these cuts, it was probably because they had a weapon pointed at them. When muggings started to take place on the Hacienda dancefloor, while drug dealers and promoters waved shotguns at each other in muddy fields, it looked like CV had got it about right.

With its tensile funk rhythms clocking in at a crucial few BPMs slower than those favoured by House, *Code* failed to capture the attention of its home market, despite selling well abroad. Since the album is currently deleted from the EMI/Virgin catalogue, there's nothing left to it now but the remixes, courtesy of Sherwood, Robbie and François Kervorkian. It's ironic that an album named after the systematic scrambling of meanings, locked up information and locked out access should lose so much when reworked for 12". Kervorkian's previously unreleased mixes of "Sex Money Freaks" demonstrate the same inability to settle into CV's lean and funky groove as his 12" take on "Thank You America", while the sassy female chorus that John Robbie slathers across "Don't Argue" in an attempt to make it sound very just plain misses the point. The rest, as they say, is history. Or it should be. With their 1992 collection, *Technology: Western Re-Works*, Cabaret Voltaire slipped back their steely Virgin recordings further still to reveal their steely ambience to an audience attuned to the artificial intelligence of such labels as Plus 8, R&B and Warp. The electronic sound that Kirk and Mallinder had helped pioneer in the 1980s had made it through to the other side of its own future. □ *Conform To Deform B2/B0, Archive and The Original Sound Of Sheffield 83/87 are out now on Virgin*

ANGER IS AN ENERGY

A DECADE AGO, KATHLEEN  
BANNA'S BIKINI KILL HERALDED  
THE DAYS OF RAGE THAT LED  
TO RIOT GRRRL, ONE OF THE  
FEW '90S MOVEMENTS THAT FELT  
LIKE PUNK ACTUALLY  
HAPPENED. NOW, BANNA'S NEW  
TRIO LE TIGRE (AND SIDE  
PROJECTS RANGING FROM  
PLUNDERPHONIC IDM TO  
CONCEPTUAL ART STUNTS) ARE  
SPEARHEADING A RAPIDLY  
SPREADING NETWORK OF  
FEMINIST FLAVOURED  
ELECTRO-PUNK WHILE DEFINING  
NEW PARAMETERS FOR  
POLITICISED NOISE IN THEIR  
SEARCH FOR AN ELECTRONIQUE  
FEMININE WORDS. JOY PRESS  
PHOTOS: JAKE WALTERS

BEASTIE GRRRLS (FROM LEFT),  
JD SAMPSON, KATHLEEN BANNA,  
JOHANNA PATEMAN





**Sitting in a minimalist cafe** in downtown Manhattan, Le Tigre's Kathleen Hanna — with her perky ponytail, black sweatshirt, and bandaged thumb, which she injured while playing basketball — blinks in with the nearby students tapping on laptops. She and bandleader JD Samson are dissecting Le Tigre's performance on a local cable TV show. Samson moans about the terrible sound, but Hanna exudes positivity: "Think about it as a punk thing. If you watch it again as a punk performance," she insists, "it won't seem so bad."

Hanna made her name as the singer in Bikini Kill, and with Le Tigre she's bringing Riot Grrrl to electronics: feminist-flavoured electropunk that aims to blast away the pretensions and anti-intentions of the new Prog rock. Face it: much of the electronica scene right now is caught in a feedback loop of "glitch for glitch's sake" — hemmefic, Tommifist, depoliticised, nidded with esoteric jargon, and almost entirely male. Hanna still holds tight to the punk ethics and aesthetics that propelled her through eight years (1991-98) as lead singer with Bikini Kill. DIY rules, energy is better than expertise, ideas count for more than ability. Just as Bikini Kill inspired hundreds of girls to grab guitars and drumsticks, Le Tigre incite young women to boot up sequencers and samplers.

Bikini Kill's records were raw and bratty. Hanna doing ditties like some Girl Guide fronting a 60s garage punk outfit. But the group's almost doctrinaire rejection of competence meant they never progressed much, aesthetically. When I express my skepticism about the Riot Grrrl ritual of swapping instruments between members onstage, Hanna gins sheepishly. "It's like dietitian or something, right? And it feels into that whole thing of women not being able to finish anything..." She laughs, then continues, "Like, oh, the process is so important, who cares about the product? But I always thought of it more as entertaining for the audience. A lot of rock music has become about being a craftsman and I'm not that interested in exploring the craft of guitar... If a woman wants to do that, she should do it, and sometimes I wish I were that kind of personality who can practise something and keep at it."

Le Tigre are less a conventional group, says Hanna, than a conceptual art project (and here they resemble their Berlin based friends Chicks On Speed, whose self-titled record label released Le Tigre's *Feminist Sweepstakes* LP in Europe at the end of 2001). After the disintegration of Bikini Kill, Hanna joined forces with zinc writer Johanna Fateman and underground film maker Sadie Benning (subsequently replaced by activist/photographer Samson) for a multidisciplinary ensemble. Non-musicians have often played a potent role in pop music — think Yoko Ono, Brian Eno, Malcolm McLaren — as conceptualists who push the more conventionally minded, craft-conscious members of their groups to breakthroughs they would not have achieved otherwise. What happens when a group is made up entirely of conceptualists? Some people might dismiss Le Tigre as Bikini Kill II — just an efficient message delivery service for disseminating feminist ideas that otherwise have scant currency within pop culture. But at their most ambitious, Le Tigre suggest a new kind of electronic music that isn't just made by women or about female-specific topics: it actually sounds female.

"Bikini Kill is more than just a band or zine or idea, it's part of a revolution. The revolution is about going to the playground with your best girlfriends. You are hanging upside down on the bars and all the blood is rushing to your head. It's a euphoric feeling. The boys can see our underwear and we just don't care. I'm so sure that lots of girls are also in a revolution and we want to find them." — Kathleen Hanna, in *Bikini Kill: A Color And Activity Book* zine

Ever since her earliest days on the music scene, Kathleen Hanna has wielded words like a lethal weapon. In zines and in her lyrics for Bikini Kill, she's created some of the most potent feminist slogans of the last 20 years: not just "Revolution Grrrl style now!" but the simple (and, as The Spice Girls proved, easily poached) call for "Grrrl Power". The manifesto form is very punk rock — its call-to-arms quality, purity of purpose, and raw power, all correspond perfectly to three chord force. When critics retrospect on the Riot Grrrl movement, how they invariably handdrop Bikini Kill anthems like "Suck My Left One" or "Rebel Grrrl", with its famous lyric "In her loss, I lost the revolution". Love her or loathe her, Hanna almost singlehandedly galvanised a worldwide network of disaffected young women.

The manic energy Hanna radiates sets her apart as the kind of person who makes things happen, rather than one who follows. "I always felt there was something wrong with me on the West Coast because I was way too hyper, and everybody else was like, 'Yo, slow down, peace out'." But now that I'm living in New York, everybody's super-caffinated like I am," she says in Valley Grish tones, her ponytail bobbing.

Hanna's home base for many years was Olympia, Washington, the center of a scene loosely gathered around Calvin Johnson, founder of K Records, frontman of Beet Happening and evangelist for all things lo-fi. The Calvinist approach, which had a UK equivalent in the mid-80s movement of 'shambolic bands' such as The Pastels and Takaluk Gosh, exalted amateurism and equated proficiency with stick professional product. Johnson coisted postpunk groups like The Reconcils and The Siltz, whose shambolic works-in-progress retrospectively offer a roadmap for later generations of female groups. Le Tigre included.

If Riot Grrrl had a birthplace, it was at K's International Pop Underground Convention in August 1991. The opening night was devoted to "Love Rock Revolution Girl Style Now", with a line-up of female-centric acts including Bratmobile, Heavens To Betsy, and Hanna's early project *Suture*. In the months following, "Riot Grrrl chapters" began to form across America, dedicated to raising consciousness, promoting Grrrl groups, and highlighting sexism in the independent rock scene. Images of young feminists in cutsey clothes, oversized specs and bright slashes of red lipstick sent reporters and average guys on the street into paroxysms of laughter or nervousness. A full-blown media frenzy ensued, with Hanna singled out as the confrontational but cute face of Riot Grrrl. One often-reprinted photo captures her performing onstage with shirt pulled up, the word "Skt" dialed on her stomach in red lipstick.

Buoyed by her Poly Styrene-style roar, Hanna's lyrics fused anguish and defiance as she connected the larger horrors of American society (child abuse, sexual harassment) with the mini indignities of the punk scene (violent moshpits, condescending assholes). In "Don't Need You," Hanna taunts: "Don't need you to tell us we're good/Don't need you to tell us we suck/Don't need your protection/Don't need your dick to fuck." But Bikini Kill's indie puritanism sprawled them in a state of enforced immaturity, with all the angst, infighting, and identity politics that comes with adolescence. When the media swooped in on the movement, it was like Babylon had come calling. I remember one teenager at an early Riot Grrrl meeting complaining to it, to a stranger breaking into her bedroom and reading her diary. In true "Calvinist" spirit, Bikini Kill instituted a media lockdown, attempting to preserve their purity by diving further underground. With or without their cooperation, magazines wrote

stories, copycat groups emerged, and The Spice Girls reduced the Olympians' revolutionary ambitions to sassy soundbites.

When asked why they didn't try to use the attention for their own ends, Hanna looks pained. "How would we have done it? In Bikini Kill it was a matter of survival for me, just making it to the next day. The whole idea of thinking of a huge plan that involved the media..." She wrinkles her nose disapprovingly. "That was a force I really didn't want to deal with." In the end, the whole juggernaut just mashed with her head. "Our second fanzine was called Girl Power and I remember wondering, 'Did the Spice Girls get that from us or was that just a coincidence?' On the first tour, I started seeing the same outfits I was wearing onstage turn up in clothing catalogues. I was thinking: 'Am I an egomaniac that I think this is happening? Have they been following us around, or was it just cultural osmosis?' It does make you nuts. Anti-feminism sold as feminism is so super creepy!" Unlike X Ray Spex's Poly Styrene, whose honor at punk's commodification drove her to the verge of breakdown, Hanna's survival instincts kicked in, and today she puts an impossibly positive spin on the bastardization of Riot Grrrl. "I saw friends who had kids, their little seven and eight year old girls were dancing to Spice Girls at parties. I thought, 'If that gives them a powerful message and they turn that into something smart, maybe feminism won't seem so weird to them when they're 13.'"

Although Bikini Kill continued touring and released several records in the mid-90s (*Pussy Whipped*, *Reject All American*), the initial exhilaration was gone, and they officially broke up in 1998. Musically, their legacy doesn't hold up all that well to retrospective scrutiny: the sometimes didactic lyrics, the simple punk rock grind. But as an inspirational force, Bikini Kill's impact has been immense. Hanna recalls the time her friend's father found a reference to her in a New York Times article about the acclaimed post-Riot Grrrl group Sleater-Kinney. "There was a picture of me and a picture of Bob Dylan and we were listed as [Sleater-Kinney singer] Corin Tucker's influences. I thought, 'Oh my God, I'm becoming an influence. Does that mean I'm a dinosaur?'" Beyond the hundreds of Grrrl groups that formed in their wake, Bikini Kill's sway spread to more unlikely quarters, such as the art-breakbeats of Alanis Morissette, R.E.M., Empire's mob even persuaded Hanna to appear as a guest vocalist on "No Success," a track on their 1999 60 Second Wipe Out LP. Most recently, she had a cameo appearance on the Playgroup record, Trevor Jackson's early 80s new wave/post-disco project (see *The Wire* 234).

In the waning days of Bikini Kill, Hanna started messing around with a Juno-shopper sampler and drum machine. The songs from that period, released at the end of 1998 under the alter ego Julie Ruin on the Kit Rock Stars label, offer a fleeting glimpse of Hanna sitting in her closet (where the tracks were recorded) trying to shed the rock routines she'd absorbed in Bikini Kill and teach herself a new language. Ricketsy and often primitive sounding, Julie Ruin largely revolves around samples (who else would think to combine Foreigner's "I Want To Know What Love Is" with a rant about violence against women?) and repetition (in "Crochet," an attack on women-in-rock type, she chants, "You killed the thing! You made me want to CROCHET!!"). Less programmatic than Bikini Kill but firmer than Le Tigre, the Julie Ruin album catches Hanna in that most vulnerable artistic state: the transitional moment.

"I was writing in this dogmatic straightforward way for a long while," Hanna admits. "With Julie Ruin, I

realised I didn't have to spell stuff out in the way I'd been continually doing it – I wanted to experiment with different ways to communicate that weren't as direct. Because I started out as a writer, I actually thought of it in terms of fiction versus nonfiction. And I felt I needed to start writing fiction again. In Bikini Kill I would write essays and take lines out of them and put them into songs, but some songs weren't as successful because they shouldn't have been songs. There are two different mediums and that's been an interesting process, figuring out that this idea should be an essay, this should be a short story, and this should be a song."

The press release for the Ruin record posed the question, "What would L'Écriture Feminine sound like as music?" This was a reference to French feminist Hélène Cixous's notion that women should "write from their bodies," find a way to express feminine creativity in less linear, more fluid language. Today, Hanna seems more ambivalent about the idea. On the one hand, it's tantalising because it offers a model for female creativity, but it also traps women in essentialist clichés (femininity as amorphous, oceanic, indeterminate, opposed to structure or clarity). "When I went to college, that [French post-structuralist/feminist] stuff was really big. Right when I was figuring out I had a voice I was told I had to speak in tongues. 'Your scream creates a whole new world of language,'" Hanna mocks in pimposus tones. "That's what people would say to me! I felt I was being encouraged to develop this non-intellectual, more emotional stereotype of female identity."

Using an alter ego was a way to distance herself from these expectations that Hanna felt had circled around her, to test out a more experimental identity. "Julie Ruin was more confident than I am," she told *Funk Planet*. "She was able to say, 'I'm a fucking artist and people can't treat me this way anymore.'" And her dalliance with écriture féminine lasted just long enough to prime Hanna's mind for more opened-up musical possibilities – "to fuck with pop structure and pop pleasure by contaminating it with political content and simplistic uses of Techno apparatus," as Johanna Fateman later explained Le Tigre's mission to an online fanzine.

Johanna Fateman first met Hanna at an early Bikini Kill gig, where she handed a copy of her punk zine *Snarla* to the singer. They ended up living in a communal house some years later, forming a shortlived "surf band" called The Troublemakers. While Hanna was working on the Julie Ruin project, she and Fateman discussed their mutual dismay at what had happened to their little underground. "The initial experience of grrrl promoting shows for other grrrls and creating a network for bands to tour and for zines to change hands – that was really exciting," recalls Fateman now. "Beyond that, it got pretty fucked up. It became this kind of basic training/consciousness raising thing. It didn't feel like art, it felt like some kind of counselling." As for the aesthetic impact, Fateman believes that when Riot Grrrl went overground, "different grrrls across the country with really disparate ideas and aesthetics suddenly felt they had to fit into what the media wanted from them, and their work really changed. What was a loose network of different people became much more homogenous because of it." (She admits that Snarla succumbed to the same syndrome, subtly mutating from a broad, sardonic punkhouse to a Grrrl zine narrowly focused on identity politics.)

Although Hanna had just begun to experiment outside punk rock with the Julie Ruin record, Fateman had already abandoned the world of guitars when she left the West Coast to go to art school in New York seven

years ago. "When you're disillusioned, you become kind of reactionary. I sold all my punk records, I even started buying new clothes – you know, to separate myself from the old scene," she says now, wearing a black and white polka-dot shirt that betrays no particular cultural affiliation. When she arrived in New York, she started checking out the local Deep House scene, clubs like Shelter and Body & Soul. "Coming from a kind of postmodernist cultural studies background, [those House parties] blew my mind: the visceral sound system sensory environment, the meaningful diversity of the crowds, plus the House vocal motifs of love and freedom – it made me question to what end my post-Riot Grrrl peers were spending so much time deconstructing humanism and universal values, if it ultimately just made any notion of community impermeable and/or unenjoyable."

The third original member of Le Tigre – video artist Sean Benning, celebrated for his experimental films made with a Pinholevision camera – first hooked up with Kathleen Hanna when Bikini Kill supplied the soundtrack for Benning's short 1992 film *Girl Power*, shot when she was just 19. Benning also directed a video for the Julie Ruin song "Aerobicide," and she offered to contribute visuals for the 1999 tour around that album. In the end, though, Benning bought himself a sampler and started making music with Hanna and Fateman. "We only ever ended up doing two Julie Ruin songs live," Hanna says, "because we made up all these new ones."

After the Julie Ruin tour, Hanna moved to Manhattan. There, she and Fateman wrote the songs that later comprised the *Le Tigre Inc.* sending them to Benning in Chicago, who tinkered with turntables and added extra sonic layers – particularly the weird noise and soundtrackish effects. Ultimately, Fateman sighs, Benning "couldn't take the time to make it work" and returned to her fulltime career as cult queer filmmaker after the first album. Hanna paints a cheerier spin on the split: "Sadie has a pretty intense relationship with visuals in her head, and she needed to be able to do that."

Benning's friend JD Samson was an integral component of the Le Tigre Inc. performances from early on, working on the group's accompanying slide show. Now she became a fully fledged member of the trio. Sweet and unexpectedly earnest, Samson brings an off-kilter quality to Le Tigre. Clad in the kind of obtrusive light-blue button-down shirt a businessman might wear, she and her peach-fuzz mustache disrupt the group's British glamour (One British magazine recently assumed she was a guy, which makes her fellow group members squirm, but which she apparently took in stride). Raised in Ohio and in her early twenties, Samson says her cultural identity was stoked by the early 90s "queercore" movement of gay and lesbian punk outfits. "I came out in high school and the only music I cared about then was music made by queer people. Riot Grrrl was happening, but I had no idea what was going on. My experience of that period was different from Johanna's and Kathleen's – I never even heard Bikini Kill. I listened to Tribe 8 and Pansy Division, that's all I knew about."

Everyone in Le Tigre pursues side projects, and Samson's is Dykes Can Dance – she terms it an "intervention" against Mayor Giuliani's crackdown on dancing in Manhattan bars that don't have a cabaret licence, particularly lesbian bars. "We just walk in and start doing this crazy dancing. People don't really get it," she says, chuckling. "I guess they think we're weird, but I hope word will get around about what we're doing and then they'll get into it." Beyond making a stand against the city's increasing cultural restrictiveness, Samson hopes it will make dykes



'WOMEN HAVE TO STEEL  
THEMSELVES AGAINST SO MUCH...  
YOU HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR BODY  
BECAUSE YOU CAN'T TAKE THE  
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LISTEN TO IT, THEY CAN BE  
INSIDE THEMSELVES AGAIN.'

more comfortable inhabiting public space. She's also bringing these techniques to Le Tigre, choreographing dances for the trio to perform on stage. It's hard to figure out whether the idea is embarrassing, adorably loopy, or spot-on, but the other members seem committed to the idea regardless. Says Fateman, "I'm not into watching someone standing onstage with a laptop. I respect that as a way to make music, but that's not a live show. That's why we dance – you have to do something to stay in the area of performance."

Hanna says that dancing and making dance music are two sides of the same coin. "I love the visceral part of music, that it can take you over and you can trust it. Women have to steel themselves against so much, men constantly commenting on us, or against violence. It's feeling you have to leave your body because you can't take the pain all the time. I want to make music that, when women listen to it, they can be inside themselves again. To make dance music is even better, because then they can be dancing with other women feeling inside of themselves. The content and technique can come together in dance music. In European countries there isn't as much of a separation, we don't get asked 'which is more important, message or music?' And what that question doesn't acknowledge is that all music is political – and a lot of it is very conservative. It's usually only progressively political people who are pigeonholed for making political music, but everyone else is just supporting the status quo."

That opposition – message versus music – makes for unsettling tension in Le Tigre's music. With *Bikini Kill*, there was always a feeling that the message trumped all; the lyrics, the DIY mode of production and distribution, and the task of inspiring confidence in other girls, all took priority over making a singular, lasting contribution to music history. But Le Tigre clearly want the sound and the soundbites to be equally potent this time around. Several of their most provocative tracks are instrumental, in particular, "They Want To Make A Symphony Out Of The Sound Of Women Swallowing Their Own Tongues" (off last year's *From The Desk Of Mr Lady* EP) offers a startling evocation of female inarticulacy, as samples of young feminists, directionless and stammering, run headlong into a pounding barrage of synthetic beats. The more recent, "Dyke March 2001," floats between didacticism and dancefloor, using proto-jungle breakdowns to cushion samples culled from a tense standoff between police and march organisers.

Le Tigre's self-titled 1998 debut, released by North Carolina's *Mr Lady Records & Video*, shunned sloganising in favour of quirky cultural observation – check out the girlish voices of "What's Yr Take On Cassavetes" impossibly debating "genius? misogynist?", or the shriek of female alienation in "The Empties" ("I went to yr concert and I didn't feel anything") set against dirty guitars and percussion that feels like being bitchslapped by 1000 chopsticks. Joy suffuses "Eau D'Bedroom Dancing", a watercolour wisp of a song evoking the undiluted confidence and pleasure that one feels nowhere but in one's own inner sanctum: "There's no fear when I'm in my room, it's so clear and I know just what I want to do." The ultimate Le Tigre track remains "Deceptacon", a perfect concordance of danceable new wave electropop that fuses Joy Division bassline, effervescent synth, trademark Hanna vocals dishing bad rock machismo, and irresistibly hummable chorus "who took the ram from the bompabompalomp?/who took the ram from the ramalamalama dingding?"

On the new Feminist Sweepstakes, that intoxication has faded into awkward bittersweetness, as befits a

women's movement that's lost its momentum, Fateman's high voice floats over the erratic threnody of "Much Finer", struggling against apathy. "Do you want to stay in bed all day? Do you remember feeling any other way?" while "Shred A" strands Hanna in Casio hell, pummelling her with synthetic loops as she laments: "It's all so precious and you throw it away." Several songs suffer from an overreliance on pointed lyrics: "FYR" (short for 50 years of *Reducible*) is a CV of reasons why we still need feminism, and the electrofunk of "Fake French" nearly topples under the weight of the group's heavyhanded attacks on academic jargon.

"During the first record, I was so depressed," Hanna says by way of explanation. "It was me and Jo getting together and saying, 'What are we going to do?' All this work that happened in the 90s is being erased and all the fighting has gotten out of control, no one wants to make work because they're so worried about someone criticising it." So, countermusiv as it may sound, they set out to create music overflowing with reasons to be positive. This time around, "We're much happier and so we were able to explore some of the sad things this time." Fateman adds pointed out that "with the first album we felt a little scared to go too far with the lyrics. But people seemed so excited about the explicit feminist content on the first record that we felt fine about going overboard with it this time!"

All three group members generate ideas and lyrics – Samson says they each make wishlists of records they'd like to sample and issues they want to address – but Fateman is the woman who throws down the beats. Before Le Tigre, Fateman – seemingly the most intellectually grounded of the three – was mostly known for her zines, such as *My Need To Speak On The Subject Of Jackson Pollock*, a "semi-facetious" screed aimed at an ossified art world. But in the context of Le Tigre, Fateman quickly became the de facto "technical person", the muse, even though the group's equipment tends to be primitive and cheap. With a knowledge and passion for electronics and HipHop, she cites influences like Company Flow, Wu-Tang and OutKast, as well as two-step Garage. In fact, New York's pioneering two-step DJ, a woman named Rose Speed, is collaborating with Fateman on a remix album of Le Tigre tracks due out early next year. "I'm inspired by the poor sensibility and use of vocals [within two-step]," says Fateman. "I like that the vocals are not always so cut up or decontextualised and in that way resemble old fashioned extended dance versions of songs. I guess I am obsessed with figuring out how much lyrical content or explicit political meaning a dance track can withstand, so I'm always listening with an ear for that."

Fateman is currently constructing a Website, explicitly intended to guide women into the forbidding zone of geek gear. As Hanna points out indignantly, "A lot of guys will try to mystify it and make it seem really hard. You feel like you have to do your research before you even go to the store to buy a sampler. I'm not into mastering the technology – there are moments when the tech masters me and it's totally hilarious. I'm really into making a mistake on the sampler and then building on that." It's somewhat surprising to hear her venerate Dr Dre (a man charged with pushing a female journalist down a flight of stairs) as "my current role model", but she explains, "I love the way he makes beats sound. I'm going to keep it at it until I can do that. I'm not saying it doesn't take a while to do it well, but it's just a matter of time."

"That's easy for her to say!" Fateman laughs, all those hours of wrangling with sequencers and samplers reflected in her eyes. "It's easier to make

home listening stuff than to make people dance, but that's not what I want to do." She expresses some frustration that critics still treat Le Tigre as guitar rock rather than electronic music (nearly all guitars on their records are sampled), but as a group they still haven't advanced far enough along that continuum.

Swim With The Dolphins, Fateman's solo project, offers a glimpse of her potential. The name was inspired by a book called *Swim With The Dolphins: How Women Can Succeed In Corporate America On Their Own Terms*, a feminist affirmationist business manual that Fateman suggests is "a half-ironic metaphor for my project, which is about testing the radical potential of electronic/dance music production for feminist art practice. While Le Tigre works with the performative conventions of rock music (mostly) and some punk-style strategies for political agitation, SWD I hope will be more about 'faceless' track production." In 1999 she passed around 100 copies of some SWD tracks, one of which ended up in the hands of Kid606, who put the track "yr guitar" on his recent *Tigerbeats* Inc compilation. A screech of feedback from Riot Grrrl outfit Heavens To Betsy mets into a womblike cradle of bells and pulsing erratic beats, punctuated by Karen Carpenter's reverent voice. With its references to Riot Grrrl and Supergirl (Todd Haynes's cinematic ode to Carpenter), "yr guitar" is meant as a "tribute to the makeshift/minimal/punk art-making that had inspired me up to that point". Fateman will be releasing SWD material early next year on her own label New Party Records, which she says will be much more dance orientated: "Aside from any aesthetic mission I might have, this project will have to be at least partially about making a social context for dance music to have feminist meaning; or to start with, a social context for women to make dance tracks."

In the end, this is what really separates Le Tigre from most of their rock and electronica counterparts: their idea of community is not some subgenre clique, but the broader world of women and women's art. They record on female-run labels – Mr Lady in the US and Chicks On Speed's label in Europe – and they have played female festivals that run the gamut of women's music, from the very old guard folkie-feminist Michigan Women's Festival to Ladylfest, the post-Grrrl response to Lilith Fair.

Le Tigre take feminism seriously, and if anyone can make this kind of earnestness seem cool in a pop culture milieu that equates being hip with being dispassionate, it's Kathleen Hanna. She talks about seeking out older feminist mentors, and nearly all of her side projects are with women, such as current collaborations with feminist choreographer Karen Sherman and art critic Laura Cottingham. Cottingham gets namedropped in "Hot Topic", a kind of "Banana meets Germaine Greer" ditty on the debut album. A long list of visionary female musicians, writers and painters, it has to be the catchiest ode to female art ever recorded – and it was inspired, says Hanna, by Cottingham's video documentary about feminist art in the 70s, *Not For Sale*.

"A few years ago I came to New York for a panel discussion about *Not For Sale* and there were all these great women artists in the room, and one of them said, 'young women don't care about what we're doing.' I was too nervous to stand up and say anything, but I felt like I'd found my place in the world, it was the first time I understood that feeling guys talk about, like the first time they saw The Who or something. The feminist panel discussion was my Who! And I wanted to make a song for girls who feel the same way." □

Feminist Sweepstakes is out now on Mr Lady (US) and Chicks On Speed (Europe)



# 2001 REWIND

THIS YEAR'S CHARTS REFLECT THE DYNAMIC MIX OF CREATIVE MUSICS THAT MAKE UP THE WIRE'S EXTRAORDINARY ORBIT. IN OUR TEN PAGE REVIEW, WE PRESENT THE TOP 50 RECORDS OF THE YEAR, AND THE TOP 15 RELEASES IN EACH GENRE AS VOTED FOR BY OUR TEAM OF WRITERS AND CRITICS, WHO ALSO OFFER THEIR PERSONAL PROS & CONS OF 2001 PLUS, A SELECTION OF THIS YEAR'S HIGH-RANKING MUSICIANS DELIVER THEIR VERDICT ON THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND THE WINNER IS...



## 1 BJÖRK VESPERTINE

CINE LITTLE INDIAN

A pentagonal peg in a terminally square pop world, Björk crafted brittle, percussive winter songs on a record which equated the volcanic fjords of Iceland with the skyscraper valleys of Manhattan. Composed in the dead of night on a laptop, her songs' filigree arrangements had life breathed into them by collaborator Matmos, Zeena Parkins, Matthew Herbert and an Inuit choir. "It was related to this winter world thing, hibernation, crystals and about finding paradise in one snowflake," she told David Toop in *The Wire* 211. "It's sort of pseudo-religious and seeking salvation— you can be organic and pagan and have ProTools."

- BJÖRK** VESPERTINE (ONE LITTLE INDIAN)  
**CANNIBAL DX** THE COLD VEIN (DEF JUX)  
**FEENESZ** ENDLESS SUMMER (MEGO)  
**CHARLEY PATTON/VARIOUS** SCREAMIN' AND HOLLERIN' THE BLUES: THE WORLDS OF CHARLEY PATTON (REVENANT)  
**LE TIGRE** FEMINIST SWEEPSTAKES (CHICNS ON SPEED)  
**JOHN COLTRANE** THE OLATUNJI CONCERT, THE LAST LIVE RECORDING (IMULSE)  
**JOHN CALE** NEW YORK IN THE 1960S: SUN BLINDNESS MUSIC (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS)  
**MISSTY ELLIOT** MISS E... SO ADDICTIVE (EAST WEST)  
**HERBERT** BODY FUNCTIONS (STUDIO IK/SOUNDSLIKE)  
**NO-NECK BLUES BAND** STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME (REVENANT/SOUNDADONE)  
**SAUL WILLIAMS** AMETHYST ROCK STAR (AMERICAN)  
**MY-Z** THE BLUEPRINT (ROCA-FELNA)  
**SNUGGIE OTIS** INSPIRATION INFORMATION (LUKA BOP)  
**NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS** NO MORE SHALL WE PART (MUTE)  
**EDDIE 'PRINCE' BILLY** EASE DOWN THE ROAD (DOMINO)  
**ELECTRELANE** ROCK IT TO THE MOON (LET'S ROCK)  
**MILES DAVIS** LIVE AT THE FILMORE EAST? MARCH 1970: IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME (COLUMBIA LEGACY)  
**RADIOHEAD** AMNESIA (PARLOPHONE)  
**LOW** THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE (TUGBOAT)  
**NERD** IN SEARCH OF... (VIRGIN)  
**JOHN OSWALD** 69 PLUNDERPHONICS 96 (SEELAND)  
**SPRING NELL JACK/THE BLUES SERIES** CONTINUUM MASSES (THRIFTY EAR)  
**ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE & THE MEETING PARAISO UFO LA NOVIA** (ECLIPSE)  
**THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** THE BOOTLEG SERIES VOL. I: THE QUINE TAPES (UNIVERSAL)  
**THE NECKS** AETHER (FISH OF MILK)  
**TAKU SUGIMOTO** ITALIA (A BRUIT SECRET)  
**TORTOISE** STANDARDS (WARPFTHRILL JOCKEY)  
**TOSHIMARU NAKAMURA & SACHIKO M DO** (ERSTWHILE)  
**MATMOS** A CHANCE TO CUT IS A CHANCE TO CURE (MATADOR)  
**JACKIE O** MOTHERFUCKER LIBERATION (ROAD CONE)  
**FUSITSUSUMI** ORIGIN'S HESITATION (PSF)  
**MERCURY REV** ALL IS DREAM (V2)  
**HAM JUNE PAIK** WORKS 1988-9 (SUB ROSA)  
**PULP** WE LOVE LIFE (ISLAND)  
**DAVID S WARD** CORRIDORS & PARALLELS (AUM FIDELITY)  
**GLASS CAGE** GLASS CAGE (PARATACTILE)  
**ROOTS MANUVA** RUN COME SAVE ME (BIG DADA)  
**BUCK 65** MAN OVERBOARD (ANTICON)  
**CYCLD CYCLO** (RASTER-NOTON)  
**JOHN BUTCHER/DEREN BAILEY/RHODRI DAVIES** VORTICES & ANGELS (EMANEM)  
**BLECTUM FRDM BLECHDM** HAUS DE SNAUS (TIGERBEAT)  
**DI/RUPTURE** GOLD TEETH THIEF (NEGROPHONIC)  
**MORTON FELDMAN** STRING QUARTET #6 (HATHOLLOW/ART)  
**AESOP ROCK** LABOR DAYS (DEF JUX)  
**SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE** CHALLENGE 1966-67 (EMANEM)  
**MIS NAME IS ALIVE**  
**SOMEDAY** MY BLUES WILL COVER THE EARTH (4AD)  
**JEMEEL MOONDOGG** REVOLT OF THE NEGRO LAWN JOCKEYS (EMETMIDI)  
**SUPERVISOR 5** (RUNE GRAMMOPON)  
**SYLVIA NALLETT** WHITE FOG (EMANEM)  
**SOLID STEEL PRESENTS DJ FOOD & DK NOW, LISTEN!** (NINJA TUNE)



## 2 CANNIBAL OX

THE COLD VEIN  
DEEP JUX

Combining the most uncompromising sonic dystopia with the most vivid, searing raps, MCs Vast Ave and Vorpal Megalith, abetted by producer El-P, united the street and avant garde more compellingly than anyone since Arthur Russell went disco

## 3 FENNESSZ ENDLESS SUMMER

MEDIO

Venetian guitarist and programmer Christian Fennessz's elegy for the spirit of The Beach Boys came out as pop music molten and buried in the white heat of technology, with melancholy ghost chords strummed through a haze of digital interference. At last, computer music which was about more than just its own process

## 4 CHARLEY PATTON/VARIOUS

SCREAMIN' AND HOLLERIN' THE BLUES:  
THE WORLDS OF CHARLEY PATTON

REDWOOD

Displayed at the behest of the project's instigator, the late John Fahey, the music and legacy of Mississippi Delta blues player Patton was re-examined in the context of his era (90s Deep South America), his peers and his progeny. The carefully annotated 100-page book is housed in a clear plastic QSL mounted onto facsimile 78s and housed inside a handsewn bound book and box, the whole package completed by a reprint of Fahey's long out-of-print Patton monograph.



## 5 LE TIGRE

FEMINIST SWEEPSTAKES

CHOCO CRISP

Hall dappo fingerpainting, half Dyke March sloganizing, this month's cover star's second album, splattered with sepias, electroscopic attitude and analized lyrics, achieved the seemingly impossible: proving the link between rollerskating and political commitment.

## 6 JOHN COLTRANE

THE OLATUNJI CONCERT: THE LAST LIVE RECORDING  
REPRISE

Comprising 30 minute versions of "Ogunde" and "My Favorite Things," Coltrane's last recorded live date was by turns inspiring, exhilarating and heartbreaking. "It's also a farewell," wrote reviewer Julian Cowley in *The Wire* 212, "penitent with sadness, fury and dismay and a passionate affirmation of life crying into the future."

## 7 JOHN CALE

NEW YORK IN THE 1960S SUN BLINDNESS MUSIC  
SABLE OF THE ELEMENTS

The discovery of a box of Cale's 1960s home recordings made in New York with, among others, Tony Conrad, Sterling Morrison, Angus MacLise, Terry Jennings and the New York Five Dept resulted in the release of this disc, the first in a series of three. Heard individually or as a set, they recast the Welshman as the pivotal figure between the city's total minimalists, avant-garde mavericks such as Jack Smith and Andy Warhol, and The Velvet Underground.



## 8 MISSY ELLIOTT

MISS E... SO ADDICTIVE

BEST WEST

Adding pharmacological ecstasy to soul's traditional strange brew of religious euphoria and sexual abandon, contemporary pop's most chaotic and PWR'd female performer has never grooved of this or any other generation. And "Get Ur Freak On" was the track you couldn't avoid all year, inspiring a legion of plunderphonic remixes from Kid606 and friends.

## 9 HERBERT

BODILY FUNCTIONS

WIGGINS/DEADERLINE

Euro dancefloors throbbed all year to Matthew Herbert and Den Boon's deceptively sweet collection of Mod/House grooves, given over by a personal sonic Dogme-style creed and featuring, respectively, a mouse in a ham can, various body parts, a click track constructed from sounds of an unborn baby, and a handful of UK jazzmen.

## 10 NO-NECK BLUES BAND

STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME

REVELATION RECORDS

The unlikely coupling of autonomous New York avante-garde NICK and '60s psych folk vet Jerry Yester resulted in the group's first full-length album. The title track, "Sticks and Stones," is as "a tribal sounding powerhouse of regeneration and trance, replete with shamanic chanting, picked guitar drone, sizzling tam-tam and padded percussion" and "Creedence styled rock'n'roll picked clean, reassembled and fleshed out with alien instrumentation."

## DEAN BLACKWOOD (REVENANT RECORDS)

Our jolly old elf, John Fahey himself, disappeared up the chimney for good on 22 February. That he didn't get to see the finished Charley Patton Masked Marvel box set, which fermented in his head for some 40 years, is definitely a bummer. But there's no better tip o' the cap to Fahey than to have folks gush over the finished product with a force commensurate with the level of love and care that went into the thing. So here's to our fearless founder and the obfuscations that plagued him. We should all be so jived.

## BLECTUM FROM BLECUDOM

**Pres:** Oakland, California; **Tigerbeats**, LESSER, Kutz606, Anticon (so many boys, so little time); **Ethopian food** (Blectal tradition). When the guy at Ars Electronica said, "it's obvious that California girls like to get fucked by technology against their will" after the guy from Touch called us "Beavis And Butt-head", People Like Us, DAT Politics, Goodopal, Gold Chains,

SF-Hypno-Zombies, Grand Buffet, Adult, Adult Rodeo, Four States Fair Records, Le Tigre, Peaches, Blectum getting back together and starting a new record. Making music with lots of different people. Edge and raw music sneezed from the heart. Orgies, raves, Austin, Texas, PUNK/ROCK, Lollapalooza, Lake Merritt bird park 3:30pm every Saturday and Sunday; ten pigeons on each hand of two Blectums, guaranteed. [www.blectum.com](http://www.blectum.com) (when it works).

**Coss:** Stupid mailing lists (Microsound, IDM, bannewmuzik); articles by Kim Cascone; minimal Techno, dancier shit, boring music, click-hop, glitchtronica; music without colour; people obsessed with gear before music; people obsessed with process before music; holoween; Blectum fighting in foreign lands, Blectum in group therapy, stupid choking Blectums, the world's worst and most bitter speech by Touch at Ars Electronica - who pointed out how bad it is that laptops have become so affordable... because now ANYONE can make music.... what an elitist fucko. Working fulltime in a cubicle, car accidents. Dirty food fights.

**2002:** MORE hyperemotional-jew-picked adventures for our ears and lives... MORE in less space and time, more soaring and more focused placing pressure on certain parts of hearts... LESS dry/intellectual-cold-boring-elitist-pragmatic-male-ego. I'm smart and I know it, but I can't really open up to anyone's rotting-useless crap. Note to those who will make 2002 less enjoyable: 'Why don't you act more female, dumbfuck'.

## ELECTRELANE

**What was great this year:** Cat Power at Reading, Beth from The Gossip, Playing with Broadcast, Ladyfest, Glasgow Smog and Trail Of Dead live in Brighton. The films Together and Best In Show. Our favourite records: Radiohead - Amnesiac, Le Tigre - From The Desk Of My Lady, Mogwai - Rock Action, Smog - Rain On Lens, Low - Things We Lost In The Fire, Peaches - The Teaches Of Peaches, Kylie.

**What wasn't so great:** Breaking girl's jaws, George W Bush, Dropping bombs, Robbie Williams.

## AVANT ROCK

## DUB & ROOTS

## ELECTRONICA

### JACKIE-O MOTHERFUCKER LIBERATION

ROAD CORE

Patching precariously between formal composition and freestyle, the Oregon rock swans' seventh album jumbled guitar twang, sea splatters and equals of noise in a successful bid to live up to the claim of the title.

### BJÖRK VESPERTINE (ONE LITTLE INDIAN)

**LOW THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE** (TUGGBAT)

**HILMAR ÓRHILMARSSON & SIGUR RÓÐ**

ANGELS OF THE UNIVERSE (KRUNK)

**ELECTRELANE** ROCK IT TO THE MOON  
(LET'S ROCK!)

**SET FIRE TO FLAMES** SINGS REIGN REBUILDER  
(190701)

**TORTOISE STANDARDS** (WARP)

**MERCURY REV ALL IS DREAM** (V2)

**BING SELFISH** DIZZY WITH SUCCESS (ALCOHOL)

**BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLY** EASE DOWN THE ROAD  
(DOMINO)

**NO-NECK BLUES BAND** STICKS AND STONES MAY  
BREAK MY BONES BUT NAMES WILL NEVER HURT ME  
(REVENANT/SOUND ATOME)

**BARDO POND** GILATE (MATADOR)

**STARS OF THE LID** THE TIRED SOUNDS OF... (KRANKY)

**PAPA M** WHATEVER, MORTAL (DOMINO)

**FOUR TET** PAUSE (DOMINO)

### VARIOUS STUDIO ONE ROOTS

SOUL JAZZ

Impressive selection of deep and rare roots tunes from the legendary Jamaica studio. Cuts by Onion Russell, The Gaylads, Cornell Campbell and more took the trademark hypnotic beats into cosmic zones closer to Sun Ra. "Although the Studio One vaults are still overflowing with material ripe for release, I cannot see this set being improved on," wrote Steve Barker.

### NINETY THE OBSERVER MICROPHONE ATTACK 1974-78 (BLOOD AND FIRE)

**THE SKATALITES** HERE DUB COLLE DUB (MOTION)

**VARIOUS** NOW THING (MOTWAX)

**RHYTHM & SOUND** WITH CORNELL CAMPBELL,  
KING IN MY EMPIRE (SUBLIMIX)

**THE LOVE GROCER** A LITTLE RAIN MUST FALL  
(DUBHEAD)

**BURNING SPEAR** SPEAR BURNING  
(PRESSURE SOUNDS)

**VARIOUS** JACK RUBY PRESENTS THE BLACK  
FOUNDATION (HEARTBEAT)

**KING TUBBY & ERROL THOMPSON**  
THE BLACK FOUNDATION IN DUB (HEARTBEAT)

**VARIOUS** DARKER THAN BLUE: SOUL FROM JAMDOWN  
1973-77 (BLOOD AND FIRE)

**VARIOUS** DREAD MEETS PUNK ROCKERS UPTOWN  
(HEAVENDY)

**LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY** BORN IN THE SKY UPSETTER AT  
THE CONTROLS 1969-76 (MOTION)

**LEE PERRY** DRIVEN MADNESS... DEFINITELY  
(PRESSURE SOUNDS)

**VARIOUS** STUDIO ONE SOUL (SOUL JAZZ)

**LINVAL THOMPSON & FRIENDS**

ROCKERS FROM CHANNEL ONE (TROJAN)

### MATMOS A CHANCE TO CUT IS A CHANCE TO CURE

MONITOR

In which San Francisco operatives Drew Daniel and MC Schmid donned plastic gloves and applied their blade master to a troley of crippled mouses gleaned from an entertaining stay at a California cosmetic surgery. Lipsuction never sounded so peachy.

### FENNEZ ENDLESS SUMMER (MEGO)

**ALVA NOTO** TRANSFORM (ILLE PLATEAU)

**OVAL** OVALCOMMERS THRILL JOCKEY

**MONOLAKE** CINEMASCOPE (MONOLAKE)

**MOUSE ON MARS** IDIOLOGY (DOMINO)

**PAN SONIC** AUTOPPIRI (BLAST FIRST)

**BLECTUM FROM BLECHOOM** HAUS DE SNAUS  
(TIGERBEATS)

**HERBERT** BODYLY FUNCTIONS (KTSOUNDSUKE)

**BIOSPHERE** SUBSTRATA/MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA  
(TOUCH)

**EKKEHAIRD EHRLERS** PLAYS ALBERT AYLER  
(STAUBIGOLD)

**STEPHAN MATHEU** FREQUENCYCLUB (RITORNELL)

**RUSSELL HASWELL** LIVE SALVAGE 1997-2000 (MEGO)

**PREFUSE 73** VOCAL STUDIES AND UPROCK  
NARRATIVES (WARP)

**THOMAS BRINKMANN** KLUCK (MAX ERNST)

## FENNEZ

**Good in 2001:** Tero, First Blood, Pimmon, Green Ambarchi's new band The Sun, Keith Rowe, Neil Young & Crazy Horse live in Wiesbaden, Austria, David Sylvian live in Paris, Touch ringtunes, Kid606 PS! / Love You, playing a track with Sonic Youth, Gustav Deutsch's new movie Film Ist, early 90s Techno, tube compressors, tube EQs, Hazard/Hector Alvelos live jazz musicians from Vietnam, rock, rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, microphones, New Order, Prada, Shiseido, the "One More Time" riff, Vietnamese soups, hardware, Not so good in 2001: Inventing new game names, questions ("What kind of software... ?"), direct to disk software.

## TOM GREENWOOD JACKIE-D MOTHERFUCKER

Due to the sheer volume of amazing materials that have crossed my eyes and ears this year, I have no choice but to spit forth in an uninterrupted stream of information... here goes:

## GLOBAL

### THE MONKS OF THE MONASTERY OF GYUTO, TIBET VOICE OF THE TANTRA

CCSRR

Originally recorded in Paris in 1975, this double set is the perfect introduction to some of the most extraordinary vocals on the planet. Initiates drawn from the Gyuto Tantric College in the early tenth harmonic using the Dzo technique, while the second disc contains intense percussive workouts on massed cymbals.

**AKIKAWA NAKAMURA SHAKUHACHI MUSIC FROM KYUSHU** DAIBOSATSU (NIPPON COLUMBIA)  
**VARIOUS ORIGINS OF GUITAR MUSIC IN SOUTHERN CONGO AND NORTHERN ZAMBIA** (ISWP)  
**ANTIBALAS LIBERATION AFRO BEAT VOL 1** (NINJA TUNE)  
**JULIAN KYASTHY BLACK SEA WINDS** (NOVEMBER MUSIC)  
**FEMI KUTI FIGHT TO WIN** (WRASSE)  
**RACHID TAH MEDINA** (AIA 21)  
**VARIOUS BOSSAI RAINFOREST MUSIC FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA** (SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)  
**NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN BODY AND SOUL** (REAL WORLD)  
**TARAF DE HAJOUKS BAND OF GYPSIES** (INONESUCH)  
**ORLANDO CACHAITO LOPEZ CACHAITO** (WORLD CIRCUIT)  
**VARIOUS THE ROUGH GUIDE TO THE MUSIC OF OKINAWA** (WORLD MUSIC NETWORK)  
**TAKASHI HIRAYASU & BOB BROZMAN** NANKURU NAISA (WORLD MUSIC NETWORK)  
**VARIOUS REMBETIKA SONGS OF THE GREEK UNDERGROUND** 1925-47 (TRIKONT)  
**VARIOUS DOOB DOOB O'RAMA 2: MORE FILM SONGS** (FROM BOLLYWOOD) (NORMAL)

Yoko Ono exhibition at the Japan Cultural Center in New York City; NYC artist Brian Degraw's musical offerings in Death And Dying and Gang Gang Dance; John Fahey smiling and peaceful behind his dark shades at his last performance in Portland; RIP Blind Joe, Mail delivery from Hell's Half Halo, Gates' The Lavender Head, Michael Morley's Dear Sweet Reluctant Sweetheart; the Tanaka Neon Meeting, Twenty Inches Heaven LP, and the crown jewel, Dylan Nyuki's long awaited solo LP The Shield That Protects The Earth, a beautifully packaged intimate view of the boy genius issued by Catsup Plate Records.

Mats Gustafsson's The Broken Face magazine continues to faithfully uncover secrets of the cosmos. Brooklyn drone-scapers The Double Leopards issue more brilliance with A Pebble in Thousands Of Unmapped Revolutions LP on Eclipse. Then Angel, one of the Hall Of Fame too, has unleashed a series of amazing films - write him at 124 Ridge Street SF, NYC 10002, USA. The upstate New York and Western

Mass bookends of psych/folk, Joshua Burkett and PG Six, have each issued solo LPs possessed by genius. The No-Neck Blues Band's Revenant CD is finally available, as is the Tower Recordings Folk Scene on Communion. Ecstatic Peace records and tapes continue an incredible programme of artefacts with Gene Moore's Twisting Wires and the duo of Chris Corsano and Paul Flaherty's The Hated Music.. Byron Coley's New Grass Center for Underground Culture in Florence, Massachusetts, has been hosting incredible live music and poetry events that stand miles above the rest in integrity. Thank you all for these offerings.

## KEIJI KAINO

Justice doesn't just work in one direction, I hope that everyone will think deeply about that.

For this year's annual marathon Futsushisha gig at Hosei University in Tokyo, I will be amping my guitar through six amplifier stacks - four Hiwatt and two Marshall triple stacks.

## HIPHOP

### CANNIBAL ON THE COLD VEIN (DEF JUX) MISSY ELLIOT MISS E - SO ADDICTIVE (EAST WEST)

### AESOP ROCK LABOR DAYS

Not as forbidding nor as intimidating as his labelmates, this Big Apple habibul delivered his paranoid Lower East Side blues with a molotovsch schmidreck neurons on top of spacy, synth-heavy grooves.

JAY-Z THE BLUEPRINT (ROC-A-FELLA)  
DUNGEON FAMILY EVEN IN DARKNESS (ARISTA)  
LUDACRIS SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY (DEF JAM)  
CLOUDHEAD CLOUDHEAD (BIG DADA)  
THE COUP PARTY MUSIC (75 ARK)  
DJ KRUSH ZEN (RED INK)  
NERD IN SEARCH OF... (MIXIN)  
EDAM MIC MANIPULATOR (LEWIS RECORDINGS)  
ROOTS MANUVA RUN COME SAVE ME (BIG DADA)  
BIGG FUSS BLACK MARBIA SERUMS (SUB VERSE)  
SOLID STEEL PRESENTS DI FOOD & DK NOW, LISTEN! (NINJA TUNE)  
YESTERDAY'S NEW QUINTET ANGLES WITHOUT EDGES (STONES THROW)

## IMPROV

### STRINGS WITH EVAN PARKER STRINGS WITH EVAN PARKER

PAWAIR

Not your typical, polite 'orchestra'稍後 famous improvisor' after, this triple CD featured a string section drawn from the cream of the British Improv community, pushing, pulling and cajoling Parker's saxophones into provocative and dark terrain.

AMIN TUNES WITHOUT MEASURE OR END (MATCHLESS)  
SYLVIA HALLETT WHITE FOX (EMANEM)  
JOHN BUTCHER/DEREK BAILEY/RHODRI DAVIES VORTICES & ANGELS (EMANEM)  
FRED FRITH CLEARNO (TZADIK)  
SHOUJI HANU & DEREK BAILEY RISH (PSF)  
LURGI ARCHETTI & BO WIGET LOW TIDE DIGITALIS (RUNE GRAMMOFON)  
RADU MALPATI/TOMAS LEHN/PHIL DURRANT DACH (ERSTWHILE)  
JOE MORRIS SINGULARITY (AUM FIDELITY)  
BARK! SWING (MATCHLESS)  
SUPERSILENT 5 (RUNE GRAMMOFON)  
MUSIC NOW ENSEMBLE 1969 SILVER PYRAMID (MATCHLESS)  
FRANZ HAUTZINGER GOMBERG (GROB)  
TORE ELGARDY THE SOUND OF THE SUN (RUNE GRAMMOFON)  
MASAYUKI TAKAYANAGI & KAORU ABE MASS PROJECTION/GRADUALLY PROJECTION (DIW)

## SYLVIA BALLET

**Pros:** I love my string lessons with Nicolas Magnier; they are both musically challenging and uplifting. I've made a lot music for BBC Radio dramas – and particularly enjoyed working on *Kew Gardens* by Virginia Woolf. Playing with the London Improvisers Orchestra both fun and gives a sense of a musical community. I received some encouraging rejection letters from other labels for my CD *White Fog*, which eventually led me to the Emanem label. Two concerts which stick in my memory are Knut Auferman's quartet of laptops at the Bonington, and a concert of Iranian music, *The Art Of Improvisation*, at the QEH. I was really pleased with my son's GCSE results.

**Cons:** The world political situation is depressing. Gags seem to be unnecessarily perversely gross.

## MATTHEW HERBERT

You are either with us or against us, stated George Bush. 2001 was the year of choices: whether you

bought the 11 September merchandise or not; whether you wrote to your MP about Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, Turkey or the creation of a Palestinian state; whether you continued to use Esso petrol when they destroyed the Kyoto treaty; whether you boycotted Pret A Manger now that it is part of McDonalds; whether you cheered when Jeffrey Archer went down; whether the mainstream music industry continued to reward mediocrity; whether you thought "Get Ur Freak On" and "I'm A Slave 4 U" by Britney put a bite-size hole in the underground club scene; whether you guessed which editors, journalists and broadcasters had removed the politics from our interviews; or whether you still believe this organised noise we call music can change it all; or whether you did nothing, I've decided... if you're asking me to choose, George, I'm against you.

## NATMOS

**Pros:** We spent this past year programming for Björk's *Vespertine* album and then touring with Björk, Zeena Parkins, J Lesser and a cast of thousands around the

world. It was ridiculously fun, bizarre, an out-of-nowhere switch into being "professional musicians" playing chamber raves in opera houses that felt dreamlike, sudden, stopgap. Across ten countries and 20 cities, on stage we never used the same helum nozzle twice. Good things along the way: Kiki and Herb shows and i-Sound DJ sets in Manhattan, visiting Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* set, Nicola Heels' Cycle show at Désordinaire in Rome, Miniamo's Wakka CD, playing with Richard Cherster at MUTEK in Montreal. Herbert live across the globe, roasting with People Like Us at Sonar in Barcelona, the Korperwelten exhibition in Brussels, Smog/Hagerty/Papa M show in Los Angeles, losing the Improv battle against Lesser in Tokyo.

**Cons:** Irmgard Keunig RIP, John Fahey RIP. A tedious Böls style reveal complete with a Bush in office. The Hoax. No sense of how US foreign policy might have consequences. The music biz as usual.

**The Future:** Wobbly's Wild Why and Blevin Blectum's Talon Stalact will blow minds in 2002.

## JAZZ

### JOHN COLTRANE THE OLATUNJI CONCERT (IMULSE)

### SUN RA & HIS INTERGALACTIC ARKESTRA IT IS FORBIDDEN TOTAL ENERGY

A live tape of ferocious snowballing intensity recorded at the 1974 Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival, this recording nearly didn't happen when producer John Sinclair, the notorious MC5 manager and political agitator, got held up at the Canadian border. "On this night The Arkestra must have been an impossible act to follow," wrote David Keenan in *The Wire* 210, "rarely have they played with such aggressive fire."

### MILES DAVIS LIVE AT THE FILLMORE EAST 7 MARCH 1970 IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME (COLUMBIA LEGACY)

### DAVID S WARE CORRIDORS AND PARALELS (JVM FIDELITY)

### DAVE DOUGLAS WITNESS (RCA VICTOR)

### OTOMO YOSHIIHIDE'S NEW JAZZ QUINTET #FLUTTER (TzADIK)

### PETER BRÖTZMANN FUCK DE BOERE (ATAWISTIC/UNHEARD MUSIC SERIES)

### JEEWEEL MOONDOC REVOLT OF THE NEGRO LAWN JOCKEYS (EREMITE)

### GEORGE LEWIS & THE NOW ORCHESTRA THE SHADOWGRAPH SERIES (SPDOOL)

### VANDERMARK 5 ACoustic MACHINE (ATAWISTIC)

### BARRY GUY NEW ORCHESTRA INSCAPE/TABLEAUX (INTAKT)

### JOE MCPHEE & HAMID DRAKE

### EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION (CKKA DISK)

### TIM BERNE THE SHELL GAME (THIRSTY EAR)

### SATHAL EXODUS (TzADIK)

### ALAN SILVA & THE SOUND VISIONS ORCHESTRA VISIONS (EREMITE)

## MODERN COMPOSITION

### STEFANO SCODANIBBIO

#### SIX DUOS NEW ALBUM

A legendary presence among New Music aficionados, the Italian contrabassist presents his own compositions in a series of duets with members of The Arditti String Quartet. The result is complex but forceful music that manages to combine transparency and density, strength and tenderness.

### ELLEN BAND 99% POST CONSUMER SOUND (XI)

### INGRAM MARSHALL KINGDOM COME (NONE/SUCH)

### IAN PACE TRACTS (IMC)

### MORTON FELDMAN STRING QUARTET (6)

### (6) ATINOMIART

### GARRETT LIST RWANDA 96 (CARBON ?)

### PHILL NIELLOCK TOUCH WORKS FOR HURDY GURDY AND VOICE (TOUCH)

### JOHN WALL CONSTRUCTIONS V-VII (UTTERPSALM)

### LUCIA DRUGOSZEWSKI THIS MUSIC OF... (CBR)

### HELMUT LACHENMANN MOUVEMENT (KAIROS)

### CHAS SMITH NIKKO WOLVERINE (COLD BLUE)

### KAJA SAARIAHO FROM THE GRAMMAR OF DREAMS (ONIRIO)

### GEORGE CRUMB ZEITGEIST/MUSIC FOR A SUMMER EVENING (BRIDGE)

### MARK FELDMAN BOOK OF TELLS (ENJA NOVA)

### R MURRAY SCHÄFER STRING QUARTETS (ATMA)

## OUTER LIMITS

### KEIJI HAINO

#### ABANDON ALL WORDS... ALBUM

Haino wings his soul dry through two CDs, one devoted to percusion, the other drenched in indeterminate electronics, the both of them heavy on vocals and dark atmospheres. Here ranging from a guttural growl to a soaring falsetto, his voice underscores the set's alien beauty, while anticipating the current direction of the group Puanakuha.

### PETER CUSACK YOUR FAVOURITE LONDON SOUNDS (LUMCI)

### PHILIP JACK VINYL CODA IV (INTERMEDIUM) MATERIALS

### POLYME LIKE US A FISTFUL OF KNUCKLES (CACIOCavallo)

### JOHN OSWALD 99 PLUNDERPHONICS 96 (SIEELAND)

### BERNHARD GÜNTHER CROSSING THE RIVER (NIGHT MUSIC/ TRENTÉ CISEAUX)

### HENRY FLYNT GRADUATION AND OTHER NEW COUNTRY & BLUES MUSIC (AMPERSON)

### PÄRISON SOUND PARSON SOUND (TILUNDEN/ SUBMINIMAL SOUNDS)

### CURRENT 93 & NURSE WITH WOUND

### BRIGHT YELLOW MOON (UNITED DURTR)

### STEPHEN VITIELLO BRIGHT AND CLOUDY THINGS (NEW ALBION)

### TERRE THAEMELTZ FAGJAZZ (COMATONE)

### BRIAN ENO & J PETER SCHWALM DRAWN FROM LIFE (VIRGIN VENTURE)

### TERRY RILEY YOU'RE NO GOOD (ORGAN OF CORT)

### PHONOPHANI GENETIC ENGINEERING (RUNE GRAMMOFON)

### PIERRE BASTIEN MECANOID (REPHLEX)

## TOSEIMARU NAKAMURA

In 2001, I listened to fewer CDs than in other recent years. What made this year unusual is that I worked on quite a few full-length CDs, as well as some contributions for compilation albums, all of which have eaten up my time for listening to other music, do with Sachiko M and Weather Sky with Keith Rowe had the biggest appetite for my time and they actually obeyed their instincts. I think I have been rewarded by the music, though. And now, playing chess is becoming the next thing which would keep me away from listening to CDs. I toured around the UK and Ireland in September with an Okinawan singer, Yasukatsu Oshima... it was a great delight to hear his singing every evening.

## KEITE ROWE

I'm really pleased that AMM's *Tunes Without Measure Or End* has found significance for many, though I have to confess that I infinitely prefer the just released AMM *Fine*, a generous recording that captures the

atmosphere surrounding the instruments. Challenge of the year has been working in extremely different situations, and painting the Harsh images. Fennesz's *Endless Summer* inspires red cherry on Weather Sky cake. *Revelation of 2001: backbreakneckbrace\_esp6* (Michael Mykota Heleta & Dewi Bendix Maryland Inst College of Art), 2001 in Central Africa, playing amongst Mbata pygmies. Tromps De Banda, belafon of Mali, flute from Niger, guitar of Algeria, voice, guitar, electronics from Europe, in one long, huge improvisation.

**2002:** My hope is that some of the self-deluding contributors to *The Wire* take a cold shower of reality. I hope to remain open, experimental, serious, continuing to love, doing what I do.

## STEFANO SCODANIBBIO

Geographical and literary suggestions, from Courbet to Matisse, from Mediterranean to Kaapstad... from Duilio to Beccafumi, it's all Western painting together with Vigne Del Moro and Montalbano. Then Wallace in

London, Jacquerart in Paris for Cavalcaselle on the road... kennst du das Land? Roppong discos, Shibuya crossing, microtonal flute in a one act kabuki. Shift to Baroni via Malpensa with Sanguneti pataphysique between Fena Del Libro and unison bandoneons... mystic halls in Cologne and maps too, plus voyelles and blue Phantom. Altri Visari in Venice and classe affaires to LA to look into the Getty... Sierra Nevada with Terry Riley... Italian, French, English, Spanish and even German newspapers... Il Viaggio in Italia in Genoa. Perpetual holidays in Croatia... Ritorno a Cartagena and only connect... Elogio De L'Amour by Godard in Paris and Sonata by Beno in Siena... then rainy session in (one says) Mexico... Morelia, Patzcuaro, Playa Azul... thermal in Ischia... cocco in Munich... Guscino in Cento, Dese' in Verona, Baroco in Urbino... □

## COMPILATIONS A-Z

- AFRO-ROCK VOL. 1 (KONA)
- ANTI NY (GOMMA)
- BARRY J'S CONNECTORS (LD RECORDINGS)
- CLICKS + CUTS 2 (MILLE PLATEAUX)
- ELECTRIC LADYLAND CLUCKHOP VERSION 1.0 (MILLE PLATEAUX)
- FOOLS, HE SURE DO PULL SOME BOW! VINTAGE FIDDLE MUSIC 1927-35 (OLD HAT)
- THE FUNKY 16 CORNERS (STONES THROW)
- GOLDEN YEARS OF THE SOVIET NEW JAZZ VOL. 1 (LEO)
- HARLEM WORLD, THE SOUND OF THE BIG APPLE RAPPIN' (HERCIES & VILLAINS)
- IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS RHYTHM (SOUL JAZZ)
- INVALID OBJECT SERIES (FÄLT)
- LOVE, PEACE & POETRY: JAPANESE PSYCHEDELIC MUSIC (NORMAL)
- MOTOMIO OTOMO: UNLIMITED XII (TROT)
- MW POUR ROBERT WHITI (INPOLYSONS)
- NGERIA 70 (STRUT)
- NUGGETS: LUKE VIBERT'S SELECTION (LD RECORDINGS)
- PHILADELPHIA ROOTS (SOUL JAZZ)
- ROUGH TRADE SHOPS: 25 YEARS (MUTE)
- SATURDAY NIGHT FISH FRY (SOUL JAZZ)
- ROOTS, ROCK, RAVERS (TRANSPARENT)

## REISSUES A-Z

- JACQUES BERROCAL PARALLELES (ALGA MARGHEN)
- DAVE BURRELL ECHO (GET BACK/BIG ACTUEL)
- WILLIAM BURROUGHS BREAK THROUGH IN GREY ROOM (SUB ROSA)
- CORNELIUS CARDEW FOUR PRINCIPLES ON IRELAND (IMPERSAND)
- JAMES CHANCE & THE CONTORTIONS WHITE CANNIBAL (RORI)
- PHIL COHAN & THE ARTISTIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE ON THE BEACH (AESTURUM)
- COIL LOVE'S SECRET DOMAIN (THRESHOLD HOUSE)
- EINSTÜNZENDE NEUBAUHEN STRATEGIES AGAINST ARCHITECTURE II (MUTE)
- ELECTRIC EELS EYEBALL OF HELL (SCAT)
- THE FALL BACKDROP (COG SINISTER)
- FAUST BBC SESSIONS (RER)
- HENRY FLYNT NEW AMERICAN ETHNIC MUSIC VOL. 1: YOU ARE MY EVERLOVING CELESTIAL POWER (RECORDED)
- THE GRATEFUL DEAD THE GOLDEN ROAD (RHINO)
- JONZUM CREW LOST IN SPACE (TOMMY BOY)
- FELA KUTI FELA BOX 3 & 4 (BARCLAY)
- ENNIO MORRICONE & GRUPPO DI IMPROVVISAZIONE NUOVA CONSONANZA GLI OCCIDENTI FREDDI DELLA PAURA OST (DAGOBREDI)
- MU-ZIQ TANGO N' VECTIF (PLANET MU)
- NEU! NEU! '78 (EMUGRÖNLAND)
- NURSE WITH WOUND CHANCE MEETING ON A DISSECTING TABLE OF A SEWING MACHINE AND AN UMBRELLA (UNITED DARIES)
- THE RAMONES THE RAMONES (SIRE)
- PHIL RANDEL VIBES FROM THE TRIBE (HEFTY)
- ALAN SILVA & THE CELESTIAL COMMUNICATION ORCHESTRA SEASONS (GET BACK/BIG ACTUEL)
- WAYNE SHORTER THE ALL SEEING EYE (BLUE NOTE)
- MORTON SUBOTHICK ELECTRONIC WORKS VOL. 1 (MODE)
- CECIL TAYLOR UNIT IT IS IN THE BREWING LUMINOUS (HATOLOGY)
- THIS MEAT DECEIT (HATLOGY)
- 23 SHIODO SEVEN SONGS (RONINI)
- VIENNA ART ORCHESTRA THE MINIMALISM OF ERIK SATIE (HATLOGY)
- X LOS ANGELES (RHINO)
- LARRY YOUNG LAWRENCE OF NEWARK (PERCEPTION)

# CRITICS' PROS & CONS OF 2001

## STEVE BARKER

**Pros:** St John's, Newfoundland; dubbing in Berlin; Bob Dylan at the Key Centre Seattle; reading all the Nick Tosches books I could lay my hands on; meeting and travelling with UK clubmaster Dennis Bovell; the rise of Bumley Football Club; sunsets in St Annies.

**Cons:** Music radio, music TV, the death of John Farny and the consequent press coverage; corporate House music; painting clichés; too much access to too much music; DATAs, MDs, cassettes and CDs; being in the middle of the Atlantic watching CNN on 9/11.

## CLIVE BELL

**Pros:** The year of the live electric guitar; Taku Segimori playing at Japanorama in January, and his pianissimo spell weaving through the year; Low, The Posies, Cosmic Ride Riders all played even better than the albums; London's own guitar groups; John Bissell's brand new Pocket picking up the baton dropped by Kenny Process Team, and They Came From The Sea honouring Dick Dale's pounding surf; Rapper Big Daddy Kain wowing the Scala brandishing a golden goblet; flute player Hossen Drums, on the South Bank, with a sublime quartet convincing me that Iranian music is the ultimate classical tradition; London continuing to present great live music in unlikely places: the Union Chapel, Soho's 12 Bar and the Kinxers are theatres of dreams.

**Cons:** Organised religion; disorganised public transport.

## CHRIS BLACKFORD

**Pros:** Deepening my love of North Indian classical music, the most emotionally satisfying area of improvised music making; corresponding with Ustad Inayat Khan. Other evocative improvisation: David Moss's Vocal Village Project (Intakt); Irene Schweizer's Chicago Piano Solo (Intakt) and John Butcher/Derek Bailey/Rhodri Davies (Emanem). Reissues: SME's Challenge (Emanem), Graham Collier's Malcolm Lowry discs (Disconforme), Miklos Rozsa (ASV) and Bernard Van Dieren's string quartets (NM Extra); Biota's Invisible Map (Refr) and Peter Hammill's Ursung (Fleet); haunting soundscapes. Waleński Borowczyk's uncut La Bête on video; Hans Bellmer and Joseph Cornell at Tate Modern; The Collected Poems Of SE Steinbeck (Durbo); finishing my tribute to the late great Edward Vesala (see Rubberneck magazine Website: [www.bninet.net.com/~rubberneck/](http://www.bninet.net.com/~rubberneck/)), stimulating discussions with Brian Marley; liquid sustenance; Ardeig 17, Tapin Houkou; the wonderful and frightening world of the Internet.

**Cons:** Too much soft reviewing of Improv and other so-called experimental musics; more robust criticism required.

## MARCUS BOON

**Pros:** Hearing Karuna masters Maahkoor Ali Khan and Samullah Khan perform at Hazrat Alauddin Selbi's shrine; the Dalai Lama's annual mon lam teaching in Dharamsala; afternoons spent listening to Eternal Music and Pandit Pran Nath in the Dream House; electro-cumbia in Mexico City; Soul Jazz reggae parties in London; Michael Harrison's solo piano performance in October, The Last At The Knitting Factory; The Necks at BAM, Ramenico parties with Gwen; Tonic, NYC just about any night, living in the mountains for the summer with a pack of huskies; being in NYC on 11 September as opposed to elsewhere, as painful as it was, and being close to

the people and the city I care about.

**Cons:** Every death that led up to 11 September, that happened on that day, and that has happened as a result of that day, carefree words and actions, especially my own, lack of clarity about what will help build true alternatives to a future that's looking increasingly like something out of a particularly dark Philip K. Dick novel.

## BEN BORTIEWICK

**Pros:** 9/11, not losing any friends in the WTC, and *The Guardian's* coverage of the 'events'. Working on more art projects with Antigel and now at Milch; spending time with *covert france*, the diversity and openness of musical approaches, spaces, and audiences in Berlin; the seduction of Doug Aitken's Serpentine show; a month in Uganda. Live music: Carsten Nicolai at Milch joining the dots between historical avant garde and futuristic RA. Superlent's intense CD 5, deciding to organise a Milch music festival next summer; getting back into fiction, especially Octavia Butler, Mary Doria Russell, Bruce New World, Giles Foden. But most of all, living in congenital bliss...

**Cons:** 9/11; revenge and militarisation instead of addressing why the US and Israel are so despised by so many. *The Guardian's* Help! style scoop, "At Home With Ariel Sharon", was disgusting. Missing too many shows at Karos because of overcrowding.

## PHILIP CLARK

**Pros:** Imprisonment of Lord Archer; the consistent quality of music coming from New York independents - ALM Fidelity, Thirsty Ear and Ensemble; superb offerings from David S Ware, Joe Morris, Matthew Shipp et al - will Kern Burns ever catch up? Equally inspiring, the continuing success of the Karos label which is documenting central European music as never before. Each release - Lachenmann, Rihm, Sciarrino, etc - a winner, and good to see Kaja Saariaho on Sony. Gig of the year: Norette Coleman at the Barbican, Michael Finnissy's History Of Photography In Sound, Henry Teeter at Pizza Express, Clarence Bowler at Houston New Music Days and BBC SD Birthplace Portrait concert.

**Cons:** Boning and predictable set of new pieces at the year's Proms - used to be worthwhile, new blood needed; the fidgety and noisy audience who ruined Matthew Shipp and William Parker's Festival Hall gig, Diana Krall.

## JULIAN COULEY

**Pros:** Glad to still be here after a precarious start to the year. An afternoon spent in a pub talking with Keith Tippett was a source of good to see the Mutable Music label getting off to a strong start - it's time Thomas Buckner's contribution to modern music was more fully acknowledged. Scavenging for old vinyl resulted in unexpected hours spent listening to Don Drummond, John Stewart, Shirley Collins and many other long neglected favourites.

**Cons:** Worst onset of vinyl addiction since my teenage years threatens the stability of my small house. Saddened by deaths of two fine guitarists, John Fahey and Isaac Guillory. Guillory wasn't an innovator but he was a wonderful player whose records never quite captured the special quality of his live performances. A really sad loss.

## CERISTOPE COX

**Pros:** Philosophy: Alain Badiou, Ethics; poetry: Eavan Boland, Against Love Poetry and WH Auden,

"September 1, 1939"; Architecture: Santiago Calatrava's Milwaukee Art Museum; Visual art: Arthur Jafa at the Whitney's Bitsitemps, Erwin Redl at the Anchorage, Carsten Nicolai at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, William Kentridge and post-colonial African art at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Live music: Manna Rosefeld, Kafe Matthews, Keiko Uematsu and Ikue Mori at Ionic; Casey Rice and Derek Bailey at Chicago's Getz Theater. The public sphere: intellectual and critical discourse in the wake of 9/11.

**Cons:** 9/11's wake: death, destruction, hypocrisy, ignorance, scapegoating, paternalism.

## PAUL ENGLAND

**Pros:** Live: Susan Alcorn, Eliane Radigue and Bleuctum from Blechdom at LMC Festival; The Ex, Toshimaru Nakamura & Yasukatsu Oshima. The generalised re-politicisation, grassroots democracy organisations; Mark Thomas on tour; Ken Loach on rail privatisation; Balfour Beauty pull out of Iluka dam project; LMC Webcasts; community radio pilot licences finally get given the go-ahead in the UK; London Musicians' Collective awarded one year FM community radio licence for 2002.

**Cons:** US responds to 11 September with overwhelming force; the lack of appropriate action to deal with climate change; US intransigence on Kyoto, small arms and everything else; continuing privatisation of public services by stealth.

## SASEA FRERE-JONES

**Pros (Pre-9/11):** TV: The Sopranos final three episodes, Steve Martin on the Discards, film: Y Tu, Ghost World, Together, that Freaky Basement Jaxx video with the monkeys: Web: [www.skycraper.org/timeformations/intro.html](http://www.skycraper.org/timeformations/intro.html); art: Andrew Gursky at MoMA, William Klein at Greenberg Gallery, Arte Povera show at Tate Modern, London, NGC6093 by Hiro Yamagata at ADG Gallery, books: Montaigne's Essays, live: Destiny's Child at Carter Civic Center in Peoria, Illinois, Company Flow's farewell gig at Bowery Ballroom, Rufus Wainwright at Bowery Ballroom, Ted Leo at Bowery Ballroom; senators switching parties; LimeWire, Times.

**Cons (Pre-9/11):** Survivor? why were those people so nasty? And what was a vegetarian doing there to begin with? Most software-based electronic music; David Bowman's sexist, racist, roacist piece of shit Talking Heads biography This Must Be The Place; Hot 97's innovative three songs per day format; Nick Hornby: your apartment in deep space is ready; Alysh's evil and totally unnecessary death.

**Pros (Post-9/11):** My family and friends are alive  
**Cons (Post-9/11):** A lot of innocent people in New York, Kabul, Israel and points elsewhere are not

## LOUISE GRAY

**Pros:** How tragedy finds its own response: within days of 11 September, Diamanda Galas's ultra-dramatic "Dark End Of The Street", Laune Anderson's unadorned "D Superman" (both at the Royal Festival Hall); Poly Harvey's "This Meas We're In" at Brixton Academy. It seems a long time ago when The Magnetic Fields' '69 Low Song cycle at Hammersmith Lyric amused, when Cave & Seeds Lite at NYC Town Hall thrilled and Robert Lepage's *Far Side Of The Moon* (RNT) questioned, but the family of friends - London, Paris, NYC - always sustained.

**Cons:** For once the issue is rhetorical partings, both

expected and unanticipated; cant, hypocrisy and cheerless cold.

## ANDY HAMILTON

**Pros:** Locally, it was good to see the launch of No-Fi, a Newcastle umbrella organisation promoting Improv, free jazz, avant rock and electronica – early fruits included a Sunny Murray/Arthur Doyle gig. Another old free jazzie made a reappearance – Jason Moran's Black Stars featured the extraordinary 77 year old Sam Rivers on his return to the Blue Note label, while Henry Threadgill continued his more structured output on Pi. Max Nagy's quirky November career prospered with *Evil Garden*, and Kaja Saarinen's bungoing crossover appeal was encouraging. I admit to enjoying Ken Burns's Jazz, interventions of Wynton Marsalis aside, the BBC's inept editing deserved most criticism. Gigs of the year: Satoko Fujii, Marc Gustafsson (London Jazz Festival), John Tchicai (Goldsmiths College), Evan Parker With Strings (Appleby Jazz Festival), Jorrit Dijkstra's Sound-Lee (Bimhuis, Amsterdam).

**Cons:** Everything pales against the 11 September cataclysm, and among immediate artistic responses Stockhausen's intervention was bizarre. The decline of non-mainstream sectors of the music industry is now really biting, with a recent implosion of classical labels and distributors (*Nimbus*, Complete...) following the impact on the US independents of Tower Records' troubles. Adorno's analysis of the culture industry looks belatedly more convincing.

## JIM BAYNES

**Pros:** The eternal questioning of John Duncan; the dignity of Michael Gira; the charming bitchiness of Matmos; the wonderful surprises from Sigurður Þor Sigurðsson; the philanthropy of Jef Cantu in all of the Coelacanth productions; the alchemical talents of Loren Chesse; the wunderkammer of drones from Mirror, Monos, Jonathan Coedrough, Hazard and Troum; the support from Lain York of Zeitgeist and Alasdair Jenkins of Eyedrum; the preciousness of Aquarius Records; the editorial quality from this fine magazine who can make a humble bloke like me worthy of sharing the page with so many great writers; the beauty of Jeanne Acciutro.

**Cons:** The dreams of aeroplanes falling from the sky actualised on my TV screen. Lord, I don't want to be psychic.

## RICHARD HENDERSON

**Pros:** Shugie Otis returns (on disc); new Rhythm & Sound; quality reissues from Reverent (Focaccia Charley Patton packaging), Sharp Wood, Blood & Fire and Rounder, soundtracks well-suited to film; but better for their urban settings: Yann Tiersen (Amélie/Pans), different takes on LA from Angelo Badalamenti (*Mulholland Drive*) and the ever-amazing Jo Hisaishi (*Brother*). Having heard the latter, I may move back.

**Cons:** Shugie Otis returns (ostensibly). RIP: ur-calypsian Sir Lancelet, The Cramps' Brian Gregory, Joey Ramone, Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth, Sandy Bull, John Fahey, Fred Neil. The fast-back, innovation-free remix bandwagon rolls onward, in wheels devoid of tread (cf OneSoundz/WEA's *Monroe RMX* – deplorable participation of Thievery Corp et al).

## KEN ROLLINGS

**Pros:** Seeing my novel *Destroy All Monsters* finally get into print and giving readings from it at the Horse Hospital launch party. Vox in Roll and the totallyword

studies in Brighton. Presenting But Then I'd Have To Kill You, four evenings of lectures and screenings on secret histories and strange connections at the Lux Cinema. Feeling the ground shake during the Drag Racing Underground weekend at Kino Kulture. Black Buildings from the Detroit Escalator Co, dropping Marusian, K Hand and Isobreaker International into a set of Kosmische: The Climax Sisters, writing and recording the texts for Rorschach Auto, Hub Ermer's new touring stage piece; taking part in the first Strange Attractor event on conspiracy theories with Jon Ronson and David Barrett, getting married in October and honeymooning in New York.

## BUA EBU

**Pros:** Blue skies and Coronas in the Oakland Coliseum parking lot, Scop McDowell and the ping of the San Jose Giants, Shugie Otis and the Cesar Bistro; Derrick May's knee-pop-lock and Iverson's proud grimace; the Soledad Porto Rico Schwinn Club and hem sahmmeishe; my Steve Bardo impression at the First Annual Wine Basketball Tournament; extra T's and drink/drunk tickets at Plant Bar; Rapmasters and DJ 2 on *Beautiful Sounds*; a warm bunk bed and the Great Wall with army men, Big ups to Anakin Drop, Soundings, Stones Throw, Other Music (Cambridge), Makoto, KSCU, URB massiv, Harvard Globalisation posse and the Hizzuz. Mama used to say... stay true to the game, Hiroshi.

**Cons:** Blue skies and fighter jets over Cambridge, MA; cold sweat, bad backs and amnesic smokes; AOL; Cingular, Bud Selig, the Standard Cardinal, Clear Channel; Michael Powell and the FCC; Steinbrenner; Jeremy Gimbel's missed slide in game three, USA Patriot Act, Davy D getting canned; getting dunked on by Critical Beans, God Bless the Dead; John Fahey, Aiyah, Joe Henderson, George Harrison, Korey Stringer, Joey Ramone and Lou Boudreau, among others. Fare thee well and rest in peace, Professor Rogn, Like I said, I owe you for my non-hatreds. And as Puchi said, "Cease the bombing". There is living to be done. Where's Paris when you need him?

## DAVID KEERNAN

**Pros:** Sarah Goodwin; book shopping in Hay-On-Wye, Underground in Edinburgh; Arthur Doyle & Sunny Murray in Newcastle; Current 93 at the Bloomsbury; driving with Peter Brotzmann, AMT and Chicago Underground in Stirling; visiting Colf for the weekend; staying with Steve Stapleton and Otto on their amazing Colotta farm, The Weavers; Milford Graves and Rob Morris at Jazz Em Agosto; moving to the glorious Argyl countryside at last; recording with Backworld in East Kilbride; David Tibet as ever, interviewing Jim O'Rourke; Great year for reissues – Dead, Velvets, Patton, Stocken's Collected Poems republished at last; Love In Ernest, meeting Tim D'Arch Smith, spending an afternoon with Shirley Collins, Raymond Prior back in town; working on England's Hidden Reverse, recording new Telstar Ponies album; Thomas James Aquinas still raging.

**Cons:** Melancholic Chicago in the snow, bad Christmas; the price of fennec; turning 30, tragedy all around this year; not enough great new records; jazz doke at Jazz Em Agosto; too many deadlines; 11 September.

## RAEMA KHAZAM

**Pros:** Attending one of Pauline Oliveros's Deep Listening sessions in Devon last February; the Nam June Paik exhibition at the Bilbao Guggenheim, even

though his more recent works are disappointingly slick and bland. French labels SMi and Deco, which are putting out innovative, homegrown electronica: Helmut Lachenmann's *The Little Match Girl* at the Paris Opera House; interviewing Christians Kubisch, Berlin cultural centre Podewil's enterprising new X-tract label, whose first flurry of releases includes such rare gems as sound artist Rolf Julius's *(hab) schwarz*.

**Cons:** 11 September, London's Lux Cinema closing, saying goodbye to French franks, German marks and Italian lire, having to grapple with euros instead.

## ART LANGE

**Pros:** Adorno's concept of the impossibility of Beauty after Auschwitz notwithstanding, Art is our strongest weapon to counterbalance the ever-prevalent horrors of war, terrorism, ignorance and intolerance. History is a continuum in motion that evolves in all directions and dimensions; if we pay proper attention to it, it no longer seems like nostalgia to us seek solace and surprise from music or film or visual art or poetry from the past; rather it's a necessity that confirms the ongoing sanity of civilisation and reminds us of the continuing power of creativity. Whether it's Charley Patton's mesmerizing Delta blues or Martin Teitze's microscopic microscopic details, the message is the same – Art endures, people survive. Thank goodness for Pee Wee Russell, Monk, Kurt Schwitters, Louis Zukovsky, Anthony Braxton, Bach...

**Cons:** See above.

## ALAN LICHT

**Pros:** Most of my record buying this year was devoted to narrowing down my want list via eBay, so the highlights are mostly concerts, my own and others'. Such as: getting to play "Little Johnny Jewel" with Tom Verlaine and Billy Ficca; three gigs with Arto Lindsay and Ikuo Mori; playing Phil Niblock's guitar piece in the massive Brooklyn Anchorage space; Jim O'Rourke and I doing a 40 minute version of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car", improving soundtracks to Brakhage films with Christian Marclay, Lee Ranaldo, Ulrich Kneiger and William Hooker.

Gary Panter's puppet show, performed in his studio in Brooklyn. Henry Flynt's demonstration of club dances that go with his music at the Emily Harvey Gallery; Jah Wobble and Evan Parker (and the epic Keith Levene interview in *Perfect Sound Forever* online); Peter Lang at the John Fahey tribute concert at Tonie – his first public performance in over ten years, played on a borrowed guitar (the amiee wrecked his) and with a damaged wrist, finally seeing Pete Cosey perform, at the Wall To Wall Miles marathon (no guitar, just thumb piano and star, but I'll take it); the Person Sound double CD, Ray Camey's *Cassavettes On Cassavettes* book (everything I always wanted to know and more), the Joey Ramone memorial shrine outside CBGB's.

**Cons:** 9/11, war, family illnesses, Ken Burns's Jazz series...

## DAVE MANDL

**Pros:** Japanorama show at QEH, London; Bert Janesch at Jazz Cafe, London; Ennio Morricone/Rome Symphony Orchestra at Barbican, London; Richard Sanderson's Baggage Reclaim series at 12 Bar Club, London; experimental music series at the Bommington Centre, Vauxhall, London; road trip down the gorgeous California coast; late summer, James Kenner's concert at Columbia University, NYC; Maxime De La

Rochefoucauld's "automates" gigs in NYC.

**Cons:** 9/11: erosion of civil liberties in the US; following that day tragic death of legendary WFMU DJ and friend Frank Ballester.

## JEROME RAUNSELL

**Pros:** A year spent with my head deep in a stack of books, among them Mark Ford's superb *Raymond Roussel And The Republic Of Dreams* (one of the first poets to manipulate words with processes akin to modern electronic music, and what a crazy life); David Mitchell's Tokyo whirlwind *Number9dream* (which somehow made it on to the Booker shortlist); Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (and his huge cast of pseudo-heteronyms); Haruki Murakami; James Kelman pushing the boat right out again; discovering Saul Bellow's Humboldt's Gift; Sven Lindqvist's *History Of Bombing*; Richard Davenport-Hines's *The Pursuit Of Oblivion* at the British Library. On the musical side: Autecine's dark dark moments resembling a disastrous genetics experiment at Bratton Fridge in April; pirate radio; verbal schizophrenia of Boom Bip & Dose One's Circle and a whole kaleidoscope of strange new Hip-Hop styles; making music in a medieval cottage in Cornwall for a damp week in summer.

**Cons:** World situation, paranoia, hypocrisy, passivity.

## WILL MONTGOMERY

**Pros:** Memorable live events include seeing Phil Niblock in June at New York's Anchorage (a vast space beneath Brooklyn Bridge); and the same week (but memorable for very different reasons), Glenn Branca's 100-guitar orchestra bludgeoning office workers and others in the open air beneath the WTC towers. Other highlights included Fred Frith's passed performance at London Spitz; Toshimaru Nakamura at the same venue, The Necks in Hackney; Carsten Nicolai in Vauxhall and Japanorama at the South Bank. Home hi-fi nights included early Go Betweens late at night, Blood & Fire's *Newey The Observer* DJ compilation, and reacquaintance with the feedback spore-clusters of Gang Of Four's "Anthrax". Otherwise, rediscovering sleep; moving to a quiet flat has been a total life upgrade.

**Cons:** The WTC attack and its ongoing aftermath. Besides that, mithering about anything else seems trivial, but... managing to be both time- and cash-poor; missing Sonic Youth, Stockhausen and much more; general unreliability of London; paucity of good bookshops; catching chicken pox in Lapland and subsiding into a putrid Tetris-playing hell; no dancing at all, not even once.

## JOHN RULNEY

**Pros:** (AZ) A quiet life; All Is Dream; All Tomorrow's Parties at Carter Songs; Amores Perros; *Ante Up (Remix)*; Björk at St John's Smith Square; William Blake; Bonnie "Prince" Billy; Vikram Chandra; Chemistry Tops in the Smokey Mountains; cooking; Def Jux; Fennesz, Four Tet and the digital/pastoral thing; Future Pilot AKA at Loach Lounge; the inescapable "Get Ur Freak On"; Jay-Z; Madlib's pure rock apocalypses; at 93/F East, Let It Come Down; living history; Ennio Morricone; Tom Zé; AC/DC; Patti Smith; Neil Young & Crazy Horse; Low; Matmos; Nagisa Ni Ni; Neu! reissues; Raymond Pettibon; Kevin Pietersen; Prefuse 73; Graham Robb's *Rumba!*; Soul Jazz Records; Sound-Dust; Standards; Storytelling; Hiroshi Sugimoto; Timbaland; Together; The White

Stripes again and again and again.

**Cons:** Seems a bit curmudgeonly/insidiously directed to memorialise bad art in the wake of what's happened globally in the past few months. I'm not very keen on the 80s revival, but I've got a much bigger problem with Donald Rumsfeld currently.

## ANNE EILDE NESET

**Pros:** A hot summer spent in a little hut on the Norwegian coast; gardening as prime antidote to big city blues; dog related firms Best In Show and Cats And Dogs, making the London Sampler installation with Line D Russell and Valérie Tétreau; Tracey Moffatt, Perpetui Rust and Gary Hill videos, plus the Tokyo Noise film at Helsinki's Kiasma museum; finally getting a laptop; [www.noahorts.org](http://www.noahorts.org); reading about Ade Lovelace; moving office to the East End, curating the Invisible London exhibition at Sonar; Bleuctum from Blechdom for blowing some life (and humour) into electronical; Richard X's *Grin On Top 7's* bringing Whitney Houston and Kraftwerk to new heights. On stage: the excellent Japanrama tour; Alexei Borovsk at the Avento festival in Helsinki; Fleetwood Macintosh at Ars Electronica in Linz; Soft Cell in Hackney; Björk at English National Opera; Matmos in Rome; Spark and Kim Hjelmayr and the NO events at Oslo's Blå club; Diemanda Galas at the Royal Festival Hall, and Bonnie "Prince" Billy at Sheperds Bush Empire; William Blake exhibition at Tate Britain.

**Cons:** 2001 was a year of cardboard boxes and displacement, moving home and office (twice), spending too much time talking to solicitors and insurance companies. George W Bush, his foreign policy and environmental negligence, fundamentalists, not seeing Peaches live.

## IAN PENNAN

**Pros:** Cor - "everything else is just music"; Pierre Klossowski (1905-2001, RIP); Paris; Wales; CP's shoulders, hard and soft; Julian Cope's Modern Antiquarian; Alan Moore's Promethea; Spare's Zos Kim Ton's Sopranos; Trouble Every Day? CD and cd; William Eggleston; Dolly Widdle; John Deo; Vincent Gallo; David Azeroff; Porcupine; The Man Who Was Private Widde; my own private Myra Deren; my unique course of treatments; the SS Malukh; the faint suggestion of Klang; unicorn futures.

**Cons:** Constant shallowness; evil.

## TOM PERCIVAL

**Pros:** Olga Neuwirth's The Long Rain at the Almeida Festival, the Destiny's Child album (lots of filler but loads of fun); Lake/Lake/Workmen/Cyrille; Wayne Shorter; Nash; Redman and Adam F's "Smash Sumthin"; Gyorgy and Marta Kurtág playing piano duets at Huddersfield, at the Freedom Of The City festival; Pat Thomas' Charcoal/Lely/Wright; Cherenkov introducing me to the music of Gmme Kouloum; writing a book about Lee Morgan; getting a constructive earful from Wil Palmer; getting the same from James G Spady in Philadelphia; Billy Harper explain jazz culture to me through the medium of scat.

**Cons:** The continuing neglect of new composition by the structures that should be supporting it, and the continuing complacency and cronyism of the few composers who are making money.

## EDWIN POUNCEY

**Pros:** Talking to Charlie and Tony Conrad about their early tape experiments; discovering the poetry and

publications of Piero Heliczer, the music of Henry Flynt, and the photography of Jack Smith; Psychedelic Sewage; seeing my drawings printed in Ken Hollings's *Destroy All Monsters* novel; taking up etching; Stockhausen at the Barbican; Bonnie "Prince" Billy at Shepherd's Bush Empire; Peaches at the Astoria. Current 93 at Bloomsbury Theatre; *The Relapse or Virtue In Danger* at the National Theatre. Durto's beautifully produced volume *The Collected Poems Of SE Stenbock*; reading the MELA email about La Monte Young's apocalyptic bonus tree climbing experience on that fateful day in NYC; a pure memorial moment.

**Cons:** 11 September 2001

## MOSI REEVES

**Pros:** Fat Jon The Ample Soul Physician; Joe Claussell at the Atmosphere party in SF; Outhad blowing up in NYC; Dave Tompkins' Paul C story for 360hiphop.com; URB editor Kathryn McGuire; Detials magazine; pumpkin pie; Company Row's farewell concert; interviewing Pharoah Monch; partying in SF with Amanda Nowinski; [www.culturama.org](http://www.culturama.org); Tim "Chopper" Pratt; Squashepuss's drunken antics at the Great American Music Hall; Modifi; Edan's Primitive Plus; cranberry vodkas; Mark Jacobson's Bob Dylan story for Rolling Stone; collecting old hip hop magazines (got any?); David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*; Mike Alfred's X-Force; Akira reprints; Living Legends; Cons: WTC terrorist bombings; the 2001 Patriot Act; George W Bush; John Ashcroft; TV dinners; getting laid off from my job music video models; SF indie rock kids infatuated with ghetto rappers wearing the Confederate flag; rock critics who wanna be like Lester Bangs; Hoek.com; elitist underground MCs who beef with each other; Vizcom; Mean magazine; Clear Channel; globalisation.

## SIMON REYNOLDS

**Pros:** Pulp; The Blueprint; if rap is arguably 90 per cent boasting-as-action, Jay-Z is unarguably King; Cannibal Ox's year's most potent argument to the contrary; UK Garage transforms into UK rap with MCs like So Solid, Pay As You Go Kartel, Genius Kru (plus return of Shut Up And Dance); SF glitchcore massive (Kid606, Lesser, Memes, Bleuctum, Gold Chains) and Baltimore satellite Cex: enterzakers supreme, onstage and off; Def Punk's "Digital Love"; hot pink electro jazz; Avalanches; Brassie; N.Y.E.R.D.; Messy; MicroHouse (kudos to *commodoreneologism* Philip Sherburne, death to *genephrenesis*), talking of which, idyllytronica (TM) (Nobuyuki Takekawa/Fennezz/Takagi Masakatsu/Vespermine... but still no Boards Of Canada LP, sob); Thora Birch in Ghost World; queasy delight at own youth (post-punk/new pop) gets reassured/recycled by the retro industry; Electroclash, VH1 Classics's We Are The Eighties, Native Hipssters and 23 Skidoo reissues at last.

**Cons:** 9/11; bad, eene air for months afterwards; unapologetic sense of hurling backwards to WW2/Middle Ages; feeling easily swayed by "chickens coming home to roost" and "smash Islamofascism" arguments; ineffectuality; the necessity of becoming numb; RIP; Aaliyah, Michael Jackson; Michael Jackson's latest face; Drugs suks; Busteme in Ghost World; just get off the screen; club culture reaches 1975-style lowest ebb; rave-punk long overdue

## TOM RIDGE

**Pros:** Relocation, reinvention, criticism, fulfilment  
**Cons:** Fundamentalism, hypocrisy, hype, frustration.

## STEPHEN ROBINSON

**Pros:** Synapse sifting at the Spitz with Acid Mothers Temple; Miyavishi Urabe's deeply unnerving first UK gig in April; second Aufgehoben session with Gary Smith at Moat; Magnetic Mountain finally emerges to coincide with submission (in every possible sense) of fearful thesis; Bill Fay in the company of friends; The Silence in the company of those who matter most; Celebrations; French corrections; finally staggering out of the darkness of a five year sojourn God knows where; completions; conclusions; possibilities  
**Cons:** Domesticity; the continuation of the absence of politics by the usual grotesque means.

## PETER SEAPIRO

**Pros:** This was the first year in a very long time where my absolute favourite album of the year actually wasn't a compilation or a reissue; Iron Monkey on the big screen at last; dunking on HipHop's bash brothers at the First Annual Critical Beatz/HipHop Shootout.  
**Cons:** The obvious; John Ashcroft; that neither American nor British democracy is robust enough to stand up to the challenges made upon them.

## CERIS SEARF

**Pros:** Outsider Art and Sound On Film at the Barbican; Gelfie and Fantastic Light at Leopoldstown; the sound of the waves on Cheshire Beach; Arte Povera at Tate Modern; Tocata Dead at Tate Britain; Marti Butcher at Headingley; sunnight falling on Fotheringay Castle; Amelie; NumbersDream nominated for the Booker; Sean Goater (21 and counting); Strokes and White Stripes initiating a whole new generation into the joys of punk rock; Limericks; the continuing rise of Slipknot; the continuing existence of the Proms.  
**Cons:** War, terror, etc; capitulation in the Ashes; Harry fucking Potter; Cheltenham Festival falling victim to foot and mouth disease; endless stream of soundtakles; electronica records; Strokes and White Stripes inspiring so much adulation despite being comically derivative; MDFC regaling (again); the death of Michael Karoli; excess chin-stroking at Camber Sands...

## PHILIP SHEARBURNE

**Pros:** Hyperdub, broken beat, MicroHouse; virtual games running on fumes and accelerating all the more for it. The 'correction' and its invitation to reassess; the launch of Neurom.net and the pleasure of writing a weekly column; learning that 'community' is something real and tangible, and having the good fortune to experience it far beyond the confines of home; the spirit of D.I.Y. and The Wire's newfound independence, the communion of music and self in solitude, the blurry joy of stepping behind the decks at 6am.  
**Cons:** The usual conditions apply: glut of product, paucity of ideas, a damnable lack of venues/institutions/publications/support. But lamenting the state of art and leisure is a luxury beyond our means today. Globalised greed, corporate capitalism, geopolitical amnesia, shrill-to-filthy righties and the cynical manipulation of faith are all evils that became suddenly, frighteningly tangible in 2001. Repetitive music became less appealing in a year when history seemed to slip into a lock groove, corrosive and overrun with static.

## DAVE TOMPKINS

**Pros:** Being alive; The Boondocks; ELP performing 'Last Good Sleep' for his mom at the Bowery

Bellbottoms, doing the Hephaestus Hop when Numark played his William Castle 'Bug' 45 at Product Placement; they're trying to name a cereal "I Am Weasel Wheats"; Enjoy Records conga player Poohchie Costello rooting through Harlem at dusk, marveling about how he was once clinically dead for two minutes, Rose live at Tonic; getting Dunwich slapped by Les Baxter's "Necronomicon", driving past the old man in a wheelchair raking leaves while My Bloody Valentine's "Don't Ask Why" was playing; Nottingham Bronx" by the P Brothers; First Annual Ware Critical Beats HipHop Column Shootout in Cupertino, California; ghostchasing in the foggy NC mountains; MF Doom crooning over an instrumental of "Tell Me If You Still Care" by the SOS Band.

**Cons:** Since 9/11 is a Con, there must by law be a Pro, something we can learn from before we're blown to bacon bits, getting dunked on by Critical Beats, Southern Baptists Convention praying for Muslims to convert to Christianity on the last day of Ramadan, Bush's language economy: "finalizing the war in Afghanistan" – like it's a business deal and soon it'll be over so we can go on about our business, wait, it is our business. "The best hope is that one of these days the ground will get disgusted enough just to walk away – leaving people with nothing to stand on than what they have so bloody well stood for up to now," once said Kenneth Ralston

## DAVID TOOP

**Pros:** I spent 11 months of 2001 focusing ideas for a new book, then summoning the energy to start writing. The high points of the year included curating sound for the Radical Fashion exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, responding with Evan Parker and Sarah Peebles in the summer and compiling two CDs of English experimental music for Leonardo Music Journal. Bjork at St Johns and Japanorama at the QEH were sublime gigs; reunions by Larry Young and Shuggie Otis reminded me why I started collecting records in the first place.

**Cons:** Like most people, I was forced to question what I was doing by 11 September and its aftermath. There were musical low points this year but they seem trivial by comparison with the number of people slaughtered in the name of various causes over the past four months.

## DAN WARBURTON

**Pros:** Discovering the music of Amla Gou Mohamed in Meftah, Morocco as night after evening call to prayer; playing with Arthur Doyle one day and John Butcher the next, premiering Radu Malfatti's *L'Instant Inconnu* and being able to hear a mosquito in the room; recording an Improv album at midnight in the Paris Metro to the amusement and horror of all concerned; all my new email friends and the records they send; Maia (three) who thinks all guitar players are called Shuggie. Mane as ever for love and infinite patience.

**Cons:** Leaving aside that copy of The Scratch Orchestra's *Die Stadt 10* which mysteriously never arrived; it's the same story as last year, but worse – even more wonderful new records and even less time free for listening.

## BEN WATSON

**Pros:** Genial Ian Pace performing Michael Finnissy's 270 minute *History Of Photography* in Sound and bravely issuing a polemical Marxist concert

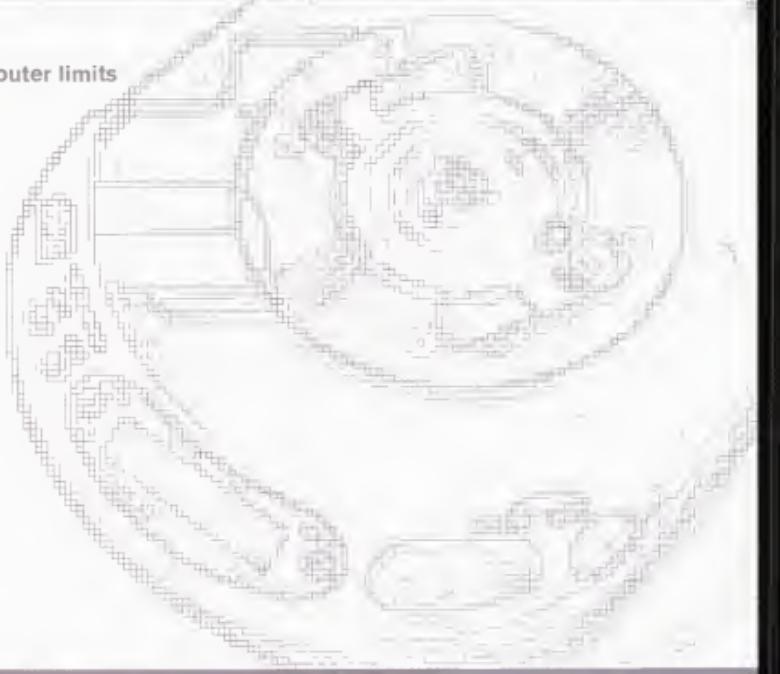
programme; Musique Et Poésie conference in Liège; Michel Delville and Marco Mauri; the rise of the Zappological Left vs avant formalism in contemporary poetics; Mu-Jah-teen Penfold making an idiot of himself in London Review Of Books over the US bombing of Afghanistan; Company at Tonic NYC; massive anti-war demonstrations in London and the Stop The War Coalition; Omette Coleman and Lot Cahill, Charlie 'Bad Boy' Mitten busking in Oxford; Muffin Men at the Borderline and the improvisations by Carl Bowery (guitar) and Martin Smith (trumpet) – how good can a band get?, Eugene Chadbourne and Jimmy Carl Black's cover of 'The Creator Has A Master Plan'; Andrea Brady's *Analysis Of Death At Brinkley*; Stu Calton's ten CD Improv masterpiece on Fenland Hi-Brow; Perce Eleven and Nero Burns at YP; Esther's Website [www.militantthesaurus.co.uk](http://www.militantthesaurus.co.uk) – go doh  
**Cons:** Terror and suffering in Baghdad, the Gaza Strip, Manhattan, Kabul; retaliation and escalation, 9/11 used as excuse for US imperial ambitions in the Middle East; widespread ignorance of America's murderous foreign policy all through the 20th century; minimal reporting of anti-war actions worldwide; lack of musicians playing on anti-war demos (what happened to bands on lorries?); war

This year's charts were compiled from the votes of the following contributors (each contributor's individual record of the year is shown in brackets):

Steve Barker (Shuggie Otis Inspiration Information), Clive Bell (Low Things We Lost In The Fire), Chris Blackwood (Miklos Rousz Sing Quartet), Ben Birthwright (Random Inc Jerusalem Tales Outside The Framework Of Orthodoxy), Philip Clark (George O'Donnell Global Music And Circular Thought), Julian Cowley (Sferando Sferandebbo Six Duos), Christoph Cox (Morton Feldman String Quartet fit), John Cratchley (Spring Heel Jack/The Blue Series Continuum Messiah), Alan Cummings (Fushimushi Organ's Habituation), Phil England (John Oswald 62 Plunderphonics #6), Kodojo Estun (In Search Of J), Sacha Freire-Jones (Destry's Child Survival), Natalie Gravener (A Certain Freak Nothing), Louise Gray (Thela Zedek Been Here And Gone), Andy Hamilton (Dulan Kyatya Black Sea Wind), Jim Haynes (Bernhard Gunther Crossing The River), Richard Henderson (Shuggie Otis Inspiration Information), Tony Honington (John Coltrane The Oldest Concert), Ken Hollings (Maruman Supermagician), Ben House (The Fall Are You Missing Winter), Hua Hua (Sun Williams Amethyst Rock Star), David Keenan (Acid Mothers Temple La Nossa), Rahma Khazam (Philtiblock Touch Works For Hurdy Gurdy And Voice), Biela Kopf (Bob Dylan Love And Theft), Ar Lange (Charley Patton Screamin' & Hollerin' The Blues), Jerome Mauusell (Fermess Endless Summer), Ruth McNel (White Stripes White Blood Cells), Will Montgomery (Miles Davis Live At Fillmore East), John Mulvey (Spirituals Let It Come Down), Anne Hill Nease (Le Tigre Feminist Sweepstakes), Edwin Pouncey (40-Neck Blues Band Stocka And Stones), Mori Reeves (Carmel On The Cold Veil), Simon Reynolds (Pulp We Love Life), Tom Ridge (The Tyde Once), Stephen Robinson (Gass Cage Glass Cage), Peter Shapiro (Carmel On The Cold Veil), Chris Sharp (The Necko Aether), Philip Shertburne (Herbert Bodily Functions), Bill Shoemaker (Barry Guy New Orchestra Escape Gakuaku), Andy Tait (Herbert Bodily Functions), Dave Tompkins (Carmel On The Cold Veil), David Toop (Bjork Invincible), Dan Warburton (Bubblebabes Up, We're Beasig A Dead Horse), Ben Watson (Berk! Swing!), Jon Wiedon (NERD In Search Of J), Rob Young (John Coltrane The Oldest Concert)

# Charts

Playlists from the outer limits



Matt Weisz's 1/3 Vol. Music mini-CD

## Sawfang 15

Wings 2000  
Vigil Geda N. (Immaculate)  
House With Wood  
Chance Meeting On A Dressing Table Of A Sewing  
Machine And An Umbrella (Special Edition)  
United States

Houseparty

Summer Avenue Vol 1 (KUMULU)

Teho Sano

Mei Jon Shu (PSP)

Bass Head

A Little Cell (Incendies)

Cosmic State

Urgent (Hef Goss)

Cell

Model's Mix In Four Phases (Elatlon)

Zoom Rockin'

We Saw A Dose Under The Sea (DHR)

Transmissions

CD EP1 (Phenomenal)

Global Operating System

The Doctor Came To Work To Be Mad Here

HIS Recordings

Magic City

Fias (Baboo)

Vacuum

Answers 51 Tiny Masterpieces Edited By Morgan

Fisher (Sleeping)

Transient v Resident

Module (Decad)

Various

Adam (Pigdog Recordings)

Jake Jaxxon

That Other Worldly Feeling 3" CD (editors et al.)

## Neptune 15

Answers  
Quarles Negritos (Piknon)  
ARE  
Wheezie - New York Muscle (Rough Trade)  
Donsacha Costello  
Together Is The New Alone (Milestones)  
Eiskalter Ohrn  
Peter John (Stutter) (Stutter)  
Makono Kawabata & Michiru Toangs  
Makoto Kawabata & Richard Young (NHF)  
Merz  
One From The Heart (Karaoke Kult)  
Hermann Witsch  
Eight Synthesizer (Organ Of Cord)  
Rhythms And Sound  
Rhythms And Sound (Bonal Me)  
Anomalous  
Cuckooing Instructional (Wholeness)  
Sunroot  
Bliss (MF)  
Supersolvent  
8 (Punk Revolution)

This Heat  
Descent (These)  
Rafael Terol  
Volcano Of Discovery And Calm Of Acceptance  
Dante (These)  
23 Skidoo  
Seven Songs (Revol)  
Various  
Pop Ambient 2002 (Kompekt)

## Ebony Ellingphant 7" 15

Lowell Thomas Jr  
The Son Of Mr. Wong Vol 1 7" (Replogle/Gothic Inc.)  
Avant Court  
Rest Form Sounds 7" (Festival)  
V/V/M  
Pyr / Ironik  
Cort & Uwe Wehmann  
Australian Bird Songs 7" (The Jacaranda Press)  
David Fanshawe  
Sounds Of Mount Kenya 7" (Heartbeat Of Africa)  
Atlas Copco Group  
Southbound Competition 1984 7" (Anon)  
Vedas  
All Time Favourite Radio Jingles 7" (Lambol)  
Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis  
Songs From Long Ago 7" (Capitol)  
Hercules  
Shakes + Sister Moon: Can And Abel 7" (Philips)  
Depths Of Man  
Electronic Sound Patterns 7" (EMI)  
Rolf Hirsch  
On My Electronic Project 7" (EMI)  
Hello Luck & Paul Ricketts  
Modern Motor Taxis: The New Holden 3"  
(Modern Motor)  
Star Remors  
The Return Of The Air Orchestra 7" (Gepris)  
Fitz Under Pup  
Heathrow 7" (Rough Trade)  
Savage Pencil  
The Little Record That Wished It Could 7"  
(Sony/BMG For The Record Industry)

## The Office Ambience

Matt Weisz  
1/3 Vol. Music 3" (Replogle)  
Warren  
Tee Funky 18 Comers (Stone's Thrill)  
Ninja Man  
Anything But Dead (NP)  
Wet Wet Hat  
Lee 1975 84 (Metastore)  
John Cole  
Stainless Gamelan Inside The Dream Syndicate  
Various  
Various Table Of The Elements  
Asleep Room  
Daylight EP (Def Le)  
Speak  
Filtered Through Friends (Rane Grammofon)  
Sand  
Self Born Alive (Satellit)  
Various  
Grubl Accordion (Wergo)  
Pushkische  
Oguri Henkelon (PSP)  
Various  
Metabolism: Pipe Minne (Oceans)  
Sheila O'Donnell  
Gutture (Promic)  
Ping  
For You (Xtra)  
Evan Parker  
Lines Burnt In Light (Pis)  
Alex Empire  
Intelligence & Savoura Sampler (DHR)

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After Central, Manchester. www.aftercentral.co.uk

Compiled by Nether Justice & Michael Segal: Neptune  
Records, 503 S Main Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067  
USA. www.neptunerecords.com

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Records, Melbourne, Australia  
www.lungsong.net.au/babyhas.htm

Compiled by The Wire Sound System

# Reviews



Maria Zanella in a still from Jack Smith's 1962 *Flaming Creatures* (see Print Run)

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Bill Evans: The Pianist As An Artist By Enrico Petrone  
The Thelonious Monk Reader Edited by Rob Van Der Bleek  
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Eardrum + Manitoba + Gorodisch London, UK

# Soundcheck

## This month's selected CDs, albums and singles

### CORNELIUS

#### POINT

MADIASOR GLE392 CD

A few years ago we might have called Cornelius postmodern. Did we unearth that empty catchall to pin down his style of art? We could have called him Kengo Oyamada. We could have called his music Pop Art. Glittering surface, dissonant juxtapositions, the foregrounding of incidental noise, a palette of genre fakes, the displacement of history and location, the elegantly crafted beauty of its technical brilliance, a warm glow at the outer edges, a cool heart at the centre. Most of all, with Cornelius and other Japanese quasi-pop geniuses such as Yoshimori Sunahara, the music appears to be a study in self-conscious detachment. Moments of bliss are interrupted by incisions and absences through which the studio process becomes transparent. Bright would have had something to say about this. Their music is ironic, in the sense of working on two levels: fashioned with a veneer of innocence yet painfully burdened with knowledge; appealing to the sweet sentiments that blossomed in late 50s to mid-60s pop music yet emotionally arrested for an entirely different, more cynical and self-aware age of popular culture. Giving myself up to it, the way I'd surrender to Dionne Warwick singing Burt Bacharach, is impossible. (There's) always something there to remind me

I don't say this to denigrate. I love Japanese simulacra. Computer nostalgia albums like *L'Assassinat De La Rue Du Pelican* by Koshi Miharu are a deliciously technocratic refusal of the misbegotten assumptions predicated on World Music. You might say they redraw the bit map. As for Cornelius, he is part of a prevalent helplessness in the skipstream of pop history, although unlike groups such as White Stripes, he takes music to a place we've never been before (though might be fooled into thinking it's just another spin round the roundabout).

His first UK release, *Fantasma*, appeared three years ago. Though I found it hugely impressive, daring and intermittently gorgeous, a phantasm of pop, I listen to it in a strange condition that mixes delirium with distance. Apart from the overwhelming "Star Fruts

Surf Rider", ingesting the whole album in one gulp was a bit like overdoing on a digital version of Spike Jones And The City Slickers: cute but cumulatively irritating unless you're in the right mood.

Point feels more cohesive, as if *Fantasma* purged an excess of dazzle from his system. Yes Cornelius, you're ultra-smart, we admit it, but the only way you'll make us cry is through envy. The opening track, "Bug", threatens a repeat snowstorm of hi-definition mouse work, a drag 'n' drop, cut 'n' pasted bibliothèque of compressed, fleeting pleasures lasting a mere 38 seconds: a single piano note sustained in reverbs, acoustic guitar that chops out chords on either side of the stereo image; what sounds like a muted trumpet, or comb and paper; a splash of splash cymbal; a burst of bedsong; squalls of electronic noise, the beginning of vocal harmony. There is very little sense of Cornelius shaping this prelude into an "electroacoustic" composition. It's more like a random call of digital glitches, bugs infecting the system and causing your CD to play fragments from the whole of the album in less than a minute.

I imagine Cornelius, the pop historian, has heard the United States Of America album, released in 1968. For the final track of that astonishing LP, Joseph Byrd montaged the preceding songs into a single piece, adding voice loops to heighten the surreal, melancholy mood. An associate of Richard Maxfield, Terry Riley and John Cage, Byrd was deeply involved in magnetic tape technology. His summation of the record corrupted the linearity, the narrative of tape and vinyl. Such practices demanded an awareness of accident and its relationship to the nature of the medium: somebody bumping the turntable could make the stylus skid across the surface of a record, condensing 20 minutes into half a second; a scratch on the record could trap the stylus into an eternal loop, dust on the needle acts as an instant filter. Similarly, Cornelius seems to be constantly alluding to the non-linear nature of digital media. Theoretically, one moment of music may appear next to any other, and sometimes does. Much of his playing and mixing emphasises digitisation's extreme dynamics and the surreality of the glitch. Unlike analogue, any sound

can exist in digital zero, or absolute silence, and that absence of noise floor (an absence of context) allows Cornelius to perform keyhole surgery with isolated stings such as a cough, or lapping water. An American voice says, "This is called a déj à vu experience," in a sudden break in "Another View Point". It could be one of those irritating hi-fi samples that still turn up on turntable tracks, or it could be Cornelius commenting on the implications of loop music, minimalism and repetition.

What follows on *Point* is a sequence of rather lovely songs that toy with expectations (what's the point?) without brushing them aside. In isolation, no individual song is particularly memorable but together they add up to a musical vision you just can't ignore. Perfection is an imperative. There isn't a note even fractionally out of place unless it's intentional. Beginnings and endings also assume great importance. "A fairly clear and straightforward example of temporal weaving in Japan is to be found in the way events are separated off from the time surrounding them by quite marked beginnings and endings," wrote Joy Hendry in her book, *Wrapping Culture*. The Japanese attitude of nature also seems relevant. The simple pastoralism and electronic environments of "Zone Twilight Zone", "I Hate Hate" and "Bird Watching At Inner Forest" recall the installation art of Mariko Mori: her plastic temple and stepping stones. To comprehend such a gleeful embrace of the synthetic, it's necessary to take a closer look at Japanese aesthetics – the ingenious yet ruthless shaping of nature through pruning and landscaping to create perfect illusions in gardens, for example, or the perpetual rebuilding of Shinto shrines to symbolise regeneration.

Point ends with a faux tropical reverie, a barely in-tune trombone lazing away like Jack Teagarden over Hawaiian surf, Henry Manzini strings and what sounds like a sampled duck. As the track fades, high frequency tones ascend the scale to a peak of pain. "Point – stop the music," Cornelius sings, before that piano sustain returns, followed by tape hiss and what could be the noise of a stylus knocked off the edge of a record. As a dissection of recorded music it's nothing if not thorough. Is that the point?

**David Toop gazes into Cornelius's perfect pop illusion**



## AGF

**HEAD SLASH BAUCH**  
ORTHLING MUSIKRUM ORTHLICH

BY JEROME MAUNSELL

Syntax takes a giddy-head beating through the circuit board on the solo debut release from Antje Greie-Fuchs. She's usually to be found voicing vocals and programming as half of Berlin group Laub (on *Kitty W.*), but here dives alone into even deeper experimental waters for Kit Clayton's and Sue Costabile's increasingly fascinating and inventive Orthling Musik imprint. Head Slash Bauch integrates spoken words and the occasional snarl of vocal melody with giddy rhyme, semi-Ambient, electronic sound zones, and largely succeeds in getting the balance just right, tickling the head with a whole slew of improbable, fractured data flows, but never forgetting to feed the emotions as well.

First track "Urkindelodeo" kicks right off with a barrage of treated spoken vocals — "Tayer neende slash s!ch ID blockausch slash layer moveableable!" — delivered in an icy soft, humanized voice. The seemingly random chain of processed verbiage in a mix of English and German continues throughout the album. Sometimes the voice disappears for a few tracks at a time, allowing glitch and distorted diazo — often similar to Pixie or the more Ambient offerings of the Basic Channel/Chain Reaction posse — to come to the fore. But the uttering syllables never disappear for long, owing normal word order into bizarre configurations.

Umlie, see Prelude 73's levitating of Hippie, or Koedoe's comprehensive demolition of NWA, AGF's mechanised vocalising feels less recycled or mired in specific cultural reference. It comes on more like your computer coming alive and trying to tell it like it is, or the subconscious song of a Speak & Spell. On "readme," a whole whirlpool of whispering verbalytics swirls around in the lower layers of the mix over two slowly alternating chords. "Shumme" focuses on an early selective sing vocal loop ("I show you mine") over a disconcerting background of other voices and drones, recalling Björk's brooder moments. Other obvious highlights are harder to pick out, as the album works more as a series of short interlocking segments or zones than a collection of "songs" as such. But no matter its sense of overall cohesion and soul makes this marriage of woman and machine gently brilliant and well worth seeking out.

## BARRY ADAMSON + PAN SONIC

MOTORLAB #3: THE HYMN OF THE 7TH ILLUSION  
KITCHEN MOTORS/KMM CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

The Icelandic label Kitchen Motors' ongoing Motorlab experiment is based on the idea of exposing weirdly musically unprepared sonic turf. The first few volumes launched members of Sigur Rós, Mún, Shilpkarsteypa and The Hefner Trio onto uncharted waters. Still, the pairing of Barry Adamson and Pan Sonic is their most inspired to date. Through his work with Maggomey and The Bad Seeds, and his soundtrack for David Lynch and Allison Anders, Adamson has carved out an oeuvre that squats uncomfortably between 80s lip-synch pop, panoramic synesthesia and glam urban

bruising. Whenever he lands, his footprints are unforgettable. As such, his pairing with the eccentricate Pan Sonic is a welcome one.

The hymn Of The 7th Illusion is inspired by condescension, and Adamson and Pan Sonic's choral arrangements, recorded in an Icelandic church and conducted by Ólafur Bragason, a former associate of Vietnamese Abkhazian Hennann Nisch, is suitably austere. The measured voices hover over a simple, two-part cry, swooping through it again and again before Pan Sonic's tactile beats force the piece up to ticks and more on. At points the interlocking collision of devotional chant and alien electronics conjure the silhouettes of Cola, a connection The Hafer The render more overt on their remia of the title track, contorting the base material and slow-stretching the choir into an extended agitated scream that recalls Penderecki's evocating *Threnody For The Victims Of Hiroshima*.

## THE AESTHETICS OFF

MENTAL TELEMETRY TELE003 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

White New Zealand regularly throws up some of the best heavy drume and freeform noise dacs on the planet; it's been a while since they produced any worthwhile rock 'n' roll music. You have to go as far back as the early Flying Nun singles, speaker-wrecking stuff like The Clean's first few EPs, to mankind that kind of energy. Then out of the blue comes this, Matt Middleton's *Aesthetics*, a wild trio who specialize in lo-fi bursts of snotty rock, complete with bleeding electronics and those noise guitar riffs that could've come straight out of the tombs of Cleveland.

Middleton's CV is all over the place. A former member of Shayne Carter's Dimmer, he also plays under a variety of different group names. Whether he's roaming through a free jazz inspired tangle or building streaming towers of squeaky industrial electronics, they all share an obsessional punk-noise aesthetic. As Crude, he recorded for Flying Nun and cut the damaged Refute A Myth Society for Eccentric Yoda's Ass-Rass series. The Aesthetics are Middleton on guitar, vocals and synth, Pet Kous on "big boom boom drums and attitude" and "Tyr" on "Bad of Bass, software, hardware and morale." They blast off with "Steve Cast 60," which sounds like a benign take on the iconic guitar solo of Cleveland's Electric Eels, with Middleton's cheap fuzz riffing suggesting the Darned's Captain Sensible on helium. Though loaded with Middleton's endlessly wayward singing, later tracks are more steeped in electronics, resulting early Mylo or Rough Trade ventures into bedrock circuitry. With prime garage punk riffs sunk in tape hiss and distortion, Off is an exhilarating ride.

## AMM

FINE  
MATCHLESS MR140 CD

BY TOM PERCHARD

Up To Tunes Without Measure Dr End (reviewed in the Wire 221), AMM had released nothing for five years. Now that they follow it only a few months later, with Fine Then, the group's precessusen Edie Pihovre is also its label owner, so AMM albums are released on merit rather than on demand. But while they're of a uniform quality, that doesn't translate into a standardised playing

procedure. Fine is a subdued piece, quite unlike any AMM I've heard of late, whether live or on CD. Perhaps the atmosphere of complaisance is due to the presence of Berlin-based performance artist Fine Kvistková, who joined the group for this concert at last May's Museum Achen festival in Nancy. There's a long and arguably problematic history of attempts to marry the disciplines of improvised music and dance, making it interesting to speculate how the music's creators might be affected by the presence of what is a largely soundless activity — notwithstanding Derek Bailey's noisy partnership with tapdancer Will Barnes.

If anything, it sounds like all concerned were somewhat wary of each other's presence. Fine is a very careful, quiet and well mannered performance, pace and volume only building towards its end. Perhaps this is why this gentility derives from Pihovre leaving his drum kit at home, leaving him to concentrate on guitars and concert bass drum. With the energetic energy and gesture of his kit playing removed, pianist John Tilbury is noticeably less inclined than usual to work with pitch and arpeggio. Instead he explores more hidden, tetanized sonorities. Keith Rowe, whose guitar abhors a vacuum but often sounds like one, usually jumps into any space left by the others with almost confrontational use of drums and feedback. But even his playing is less determined here. All of this is not to say that the record is unsuccessful, because the atmosphere of fragility and tension is as attractive as it is frustrating.

Despite all the uncertainty, AMM's members are so in tune with each other by now that their music sometimes takes on a seemingly composed quality. Likewise, each player is quick to disrupt any complacency to which such experience might give rise. Here, perhaps, a group-wide benevolence promotes more direct co-operation between the musicians than is their norm. Little examples are dotted around the performance — the downward guitar glissando and bell chime that mark the true beginning of the music a couple of minutes in; the collective key change that lifts the music upwards after quarter of an hour; the valedictory piano chonk-in-stasis affirmed with static by Rowe and bass pounding from Pihovre.

A form of collaboration after the fact is added to the recording. Track inserts split the performance into seven parts, durations giving a visual cue as to how to hear the performance as a whole. This hasn't always been the case for AMM recordings, and I wonder whether such collusion with the listener gives some of the innovation given away.

## AUFGEHOBEN NO PROCESS

VS GARY SMITH  
MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN  
JUNIOR MINT IMPRC004 CD

BY ALAN CUMMING

For improvisation as a process, the now is all. The music is usually perceived as being based on the multiplicity of cognitive and emotional choices constantly opening up to the player in a zone that combines pleasure with empowerment. For rock too, that moment when preconceived structures are animated anew by the nervous thrill of electrically hitting ears and damp flesh is endlessly miraculous. In both cases, post-event manipulation is seen as somehow "fake," a

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# Soundcheck

## VARIOUS

### CAN'T STOP IT: AUSTRALIAN POST-PUNK 1978-82

CHAPTER MUSIC CH32 CD

During the 1970s, Australian pop tastes were defined by the Ozrock monsters – AC/DC, Cold Chisel and Dragon – who filled the suburban beer bars; and, for light entertainment, by Countdown, the hugely influential weekly pop programme hosted by Ian 'Molly' Meldrum. This was compulsive, car crash viewing. Everyone watched. Meldrum was an atrocious interviewer, utterly inarticulate and shamelessly obsequious. Watching him blunder through an hour of prime-time every Sunday evening was a kind of national perversity, an appalled self-mockification, proof against pretentiousness.

*Long Way To The Top*, the recent six-hour ABC television documentary on the history of Australian rock 'n' roll, preserves for rufous posterity one of the pivotal moments in the show's history. Prince Charles is, for reasons unclear, the edition's star guest. Stunned by Meldrum's tortuous burbling, Charles asks, "Don't you have one of those seaprompters?" When the heir to the British throne is sharper than the nation's topmost pop picker, you know you've got a problem. Change had to come.

In fact, it already had. The dead end desert island defiance of *The Saints'* self-pressed "I'll Be Stranded" had been named Single Of The Week in UK rock weekly Sounds late in 1976, pipping "Anarchy In The UK" at the punk post. The floodgates opened.

As elsewhere, Australian punks had to battle not only entrenched interests but also each other. Militancy made for fiercely divisive scenes and awkward, exclusive codes which, in turn, provided frightening variety. *Can't Stop It* collects 20 early examples of the local response to the Year Zero imperative. It is by no means definitive. Almost all the tracks are entirely obscure. Better known exports like The Birthday Party, The Go-Betweens and The Laughing Clowns are not represented, though their influence is often felt. Similarly, the Perth punk scene, a hotbed of melodic contention and frantic romance, is completely ignored: the early recordings of West Australian groups like The Scientists, The Victims, The

Manikins and the early Triffids made less of a virtue of sheer perversity.

Even so, this collection shows the extraordinary diversity of local initiatives. In the three eastern states' capitals, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, malcontents drew on a variety of alien sources (Detroit, Bowie/Eno, Krautrock and CBGBs – all kosher now, of course) when mixing their own explosive cocktails. As with any period of frantic experiment, there were mixed results.

The first track, the noisy squall of The Moodists' debut "Gone Dead", is propelled by Chris Welsh's lumbering bass and has an insouciant voodoo groove that recalls The Stooges. If not quite a classic, its offhand swagger does show the killing confidence that eventually endeared singer David Grinley to all discerning Australians. Welsh also drives The Fabulous Marquises' "Honeymoon", with equally compelling effect, its lyrical lync swept under a sweet keyboard wash while his bass obsessively frets. "Love By Numbers" by Ash Wednesday (who's currently a touring member of Einstürzende Neubauten) is gleefully conceptual, a tedious intonation interrupted briefly by a dreamy, melodic sigh.

Elsewhere, and especially in Sydney, attaining unlovability sometimes seemed the primary purpose. Whatever the pretense, the harky-jerky rhythms and squawking vocals of Vogt 465's "Voices A Drama" haven't won well. Nor has the robotic arthouse liberation of "Sweet And Babbles", by their successors, The Tame Omearas. Another offshoot, Wild West, is far more impressive. "We Can Do" has fat, insistent, almost funky bass and a spacious production which blends noise, competing voices and detracted whistling into a stomp recalling The Pop Group. "Pony Club" by The Limp, featuring Pet Mel refugees Judy and Jane McGee, is stranger yet. It employs the clipped diction, Moebius keyboards and nautical soundings of space odyssey to describe the loneliness of the reluctant ponygirl! It's actually unsettling. The Makers Of The Dead Travel Fast were another group of Sydney experimentalists with a gobstopping name. Constructed largely from rattling piano, kitchen cutlery and synthesized whirrings, "The Dumb Waters", their slice of social comment, is both catchy and sardonic, more

Madness than Cabaret Voltaire. The Particles aspired to the condition of bubblegum, but the wavy, murmurous "Apricot Dream" is nowhere near annoying enough. The Shugfucers, also from Sydney, pled a more prosaic trade, "Cacophony" posts fair warning of its honking, distorted contents, another raucous Stooges reheat with the sole aim, seemingly, of "making me shit in my pants".

Melbourne实验ists were less melodramatic and more compelling. With "Lamp That", instrumental sextet Equal Loco fused woolly, distorted beats and slinky cat guitars to angular jazz-rock grooves with high stepping effect. "How Low Can You Go?" by Essendon Airport, an early vehicle for composer David Chesworth, is a hypnotic exercise for guitar, synthesizer and minimal cellophone snare which has the clamy of hypothesis. Featuring future Wire contributor Philip Brophy, the glyphic "toh tch tch", as Skippy says when Sonny's slow on the uptake) contribute "One Note Song", which starts out as a mad thrash and develops into the sort of demented burlesque Goran Bregovic wrote for Emir Kusturica's film *Underground*. It is, apparently, only one of the many versions of this wordless and, allegedly, monotonous "song".

Brisbane was different again. With the refined and pugnacious Kiwi grannie, John Byrne Petersen, than Australia's most deeply conservative political force, running the State, how could it not? Xero's "The Girls" is a stolid feminist curse, the sound of restless citharas regattating deep-seated disturbance. It makes for uncomfortable listening. The Apartments' first single "Help" is far prettier. Brisk and ringing with a stricken lyc, it is perfectly poopy. Peter Milton Welsh's battered romantic persona, the literate little boy lost who'll sing shyly for his supper, is already in place, already affecting. It wasn't a hit. The Pits' "Words" is blithely absurdist. Unlike the more portentous tracks here – Ron Rude's "Piano Piano", for instance, a wretched prediction of 80s pop – it's essentially playful, glad to experiment.

Happily, experimentation is this collection's strongest suit. Although the execution is occasionally clumsy, some of the strategies evolved are ingenious. And some proved prescient. □

Left to right: Ron Rude, The Moodists, Axind from The Particles, Ash Wednesday

**Bleddyn Butcher picks through the debris and desert island defiance of Australian post-punk**



betrayal of everything the music stands for. Brighton-based twin drum 'n' sampler Inc Aufgeboten NS Process (led by Wire writer Stephan Robinson) take a shrillshing delight in going after these purist trutines with charrwes. While their first album was a ridiculous dense DNA Frankensteins patchwork, resequenced from hundreds of microloops, Magnetic Mountain goes the other way by cutting longer improvised pieces down to their label's cores. These are then subjected to violent post-production cutting and processing, coalescing into finished pieces with the bludgeoning, overdriven power of groups like Mainliner and Musical Transonic. Post-improv guru Gary Smith wrecks his unique brand of textual stereo dynamics, whirling through the debris like a hyper-accelerated Hong Kong action star deftly fending off multiple lumbering opponents at once. Methodology aside, this is a grrr-inducing, extreme pile-up of noise, rock and improv. Less a case of ghosts in the machine than of stabbing, genetically altered mutants.

## STEFFEN BASHO JUNGHANS

### LANDSCAPES IN EXILE

BLUE MOMENT BM008 CD

BY JULIAN COVLEY

German guitarist Steffen Basho Junghans may be unconventional but the techniques he employs on *Landscapes In Exile* are obvious enough: alternative soundings suggested by the nature of the instrument. Nothing in his approach needs of trickery or perversity. Immediately striking is his decisiveness — firm gestures far removed from tentative probing. His music is testimony to hours spent getting to know his six and 12 string acoustic guitars inside out.

He has made no secret of his affinities with American guitarists Robbie Basho, John Fahey, Peter Lang and Lee Kette, and his playing overlaps these specific characters. But this album emerges from the throbbing core of Basho Junghans's relationship with his instruments. Resilient strings are hammered, tapped, rubbed and scratched. The guitar whispers and roars. The resulting music usually has a strong propulsive rhythmic drive. Each moment is effectively orchestrated, with Basho Junghans picking out melodic figures within percussively punctuated sequences of chords and phantom shreds. Even when he's negotiating venomous slides, he is emotionally in control. Listeners familiar with his last album *Inside (Strange Attractors, 2001)* will be hungry for the lengthy, two part title track of *Landscapes In Exile*. Its meatochug should also appeal to anyone with a taste for Indian reggae, Native American chants or Neuf's Krautrock at its most hypnotic.

## THOMAS BUCKNER & TOM HAMILTON

### JUMP THE CIRCLE, JUMP THE LINE

MUTABLEMUSIC 170072 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Thomas Buckner is an unusual, possibly unique figure in contemporary music. A classically trained baritone, he became involved in free Improv in the 1960s and worked in a trio with Roscoe Mitchell, '35 years ago when I began to explore solo and group improvisation, the idea was to make improvisations that sounded like

compositions. [Now] I want my improvisations, both solo and group, to sound (and be) unpredictable," he writes, and with *Jump The Circle* he succeeds. Certainly there's nothing too classical about this: this live recording from 2000,

Since the early 90s, he has been performing with electronic artist Tom Hamilton (earlier recordings include *Act Of Finding* and *Off-Hour Wet State*). Hamilton here revisits his "cockpit theory" that "an after Euclid has been in a constant state of decline. What can I imagine to be more perfect than the representation of circle, square and triangle?" Here he doesn't even try, favouring asymmetry and instability. The two parts, voice and electronics, are developed independently, except for what Buckner describes as the "wild card": the live electronic processing of the voice. Buckner's vocalising is wordless, also involving laughing, gurgling, monkey noises and so on, while the pure electronics range from wacky soundscapes and rocket launches to computer bleeps and glitches. The closing segment reaches a melancholy end, in the context of what's gone before, plaintive conclusion.

## BURN/BUTCHER/DAVIES/EDWARDS

### THE FIRST TWO GIGS

EMMEN 4063 CD

BY BEN WATSON

Improvisation of this calibre will not make anyone nod, but it certainly inspires devotion. We should thank Martin Davison and Clive Graham for hunting their digital recording gear to venues in Walthamstow (25 May 2000) and Finsbury Park (17 September 2000), in a snowstorm. Davison emphasises that "no amplification or other form of electronics were used — there were no loudspeakers in sight". A paradoxical statement for someone issuing a CD, maybe not when it was recorded, but how else are we meant to play it back? It would be a shame if this "real music" nonsense put off people addicted to the sound of electric guitars distorting speaker cones or sped up drums pounding through massive bins. This is not one of Emanem's releases with whole tone, classical pretensions: the soundworld is post-Hendrix, post-Lachmann — zonemashtr.

Instrumentation crystallises historical development. No one can sit at a piano — or a sampler based on the tempered system — and avoid the tonal system. As Stomu Yamashita demonstrated in the early 70s, you need to crawl inside the bloody thing. Planet Cha! Bum is a leading interpreter of the experimental American composer Henry Cowell. He turns his piano into an electric soubrette. His credit here is supplemented with "and percussion": traditional pianism is shrivelled to a palimpsest. Bassist John Edwards is on a roll, like he's suddenly discovered a thousand new sounds. Indeed, when he plays live, you cannot take your eyes off him. Harpist Rhoda Davies also transforms his instrument into a grotto glistening with variegated sonorities. John Butcher's distinctive approach to the sax is well known: the quartet benefit from interventions that appear like judgements on the ensemble sound.

Edwards and Davies lead from beneath, providing a writing mess riven with pressure vectors and toothed forms. Burns and Butcher shelter their musical lines, skewer this mass with their fragments. Musical materials have been

moderated and pulvressed so that collective intuition can take hold, a phantasmagoria packed with frights, jokes, sudden arithes and equally sudden emanos. Brief episodes — a clacking piece of brazen rhythm, one of Butcher's typical recidivesses of harmonic argument — could be isolated as gems (released as singles?), but the point is the open-ended process. The rhythmic snap is sometimes reminiscent of bebop (maybe Will Gomes's tap dancing has rubbed off on Davies), all done with the most absurd extremes of squeak and screech. There's a sense of movement and action, as if the musicians were twanging and tweaking a giant construction. The quartet recall Nick Coulton's 80s Gothic Improv quartet Conspiracy. Improvisation is essentially a live form, but — following Pierre Boulez's remark that anyone listening to Tchaikovsky on a gramophone is actually listening to "electronic music" — once it's in recorded format, it can be considered a sequence of electronic sound. This particular sequence is so packed with variety and event it makes computerised electronics, so often reliant on artificial sustain and repetition, seem mono-dimensional and inert. When the need for style as an identity fix moves on to new buzzes — as it will — this CD will still fascinate: its attraction is not its methodological status vis à vis other music, but intrinsic.

## JOHN BUTCHER & GERRY HEMINGWAY

### SHOOTERS AND BOWLERS

RED TOUCH RT0101A CD

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

Timing is everything in the creation of collaborations, and the timing was ripe for saxophonist John Butcher and percussionist Gerry Hemingway to tour the US in February 2000. Butcher had begun an impressive run of recordings on North American labels with CDs on Webby Rail and Nusceps. Though Hemingway had a lengthy history of collaborating with European improvisers, the release of Tim And Jerry (Echtele) with synthesist Thomas Lohn signalled a deepening interest in integrating free improvisation and MIDI-triggered samples.

As evidenced by the two longest pieces on Shooters And Bowlers, recorded at the tour's Chicago stop, the resulting music was flinty and probing, prompting a London studio session three months later, which yielded six shorter, arguably more formalised pieces. The album does not simply document the first meetings of provocative, complementary sensibilities, but a development of methods that initially shape an improvisation without determining its ultimate structure. They make clear, deliberate choices in beginning a piece, like the soft, unpressured blowing and metallic scraping of "Clear Climax", and the buoying call and response between soprano and harmonica on "Hay". However, each improvisation on the album lurches in unanticipated directions that don't undermine its inception so much as resist it.

Each modulation of texture or intensity reinforces the community of their exchanges. "Shift" spirals and ebbs over the course of 17 minutes. Central to its overall cohesion is Hemingway's unfliching use of pulse and even patterns, and Butcher's success in elongating staccato bursts into a loping legato, and in whittling a flowing line until it is little more than

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a shaving. Still, this relatively calibrated interaction is not the product of years, let alone decades of refinement, but of exceptionally keen intuition. Buscher and Hemingway are simply on the same page from the get-go.

**JOHN CALE**  
**DREAM INTERPRETATION:**  
**INSIDE THE DREAM**  
**SYNDICATE VOL 2**  
TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS TOE79 CD

**JOHN CALE**  
**STAINLESS GAMELAN: INSIDE**  
**THE DREAM SYNDICATE VOL 3**  
TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS TOE80 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Here's the long awaited arrival of the final two remarkable volumes of John Cale's lo-fi home experiments, in the trilogy mastered by Tony Conrad and titled *New York* in the 1960s. They span a period from roughly 1964, when Cale was playing in The Dream Syndicate with Conrads, La Monte Young, Marzen Zappa and Angus MacLise, up until 1969, a few months after he was sacked from The Velvet Underground. Most of these tracks are frenetic, overdriven dronists, employing viola, guitar, organ, piano, mimesis and tape. In fact, 'Testing chronicles' is not putting it too strongly – Cale chooses close-grained sounds, like taped down chords on a Vox Continental organ, which strain to breathing with unresolved tension, and then shooch like a pustule longing for the lance. His viola engages with Conrads' violin in a dance macabre at once sonic and overflowing, hellish and interesting. Cale thrashes the abandoned and amplified guitars of a grand piano, evoking thunderclouds rolling over the horizon. When it succeeds in kicking off, it's music as elemental force. It doesn't build to a climax; it's saying structure is for wimps. Composer Kevin Volans says what's exciting about Alcian music is how it's disproportionate – not in proportion. Cale's distorted, knuckle-bleeding workouts are like that too.

Volume two is the most satisfying set. Cale with Conrads, Cale alone, and a fine one-sided skiffle thrash alongside the cimbalom of VU's original drummer Angus MacLise. This last is called 'Hot Scene' – a scene is slag left after smelting out, by the way. The hit single off this album is 'Be Myself Right Now' (De Green Wires At The World's Tallest Building), three minutes of slytomy strings, like an underwater violin concert. This is just plain beautiful.

Volume three is a tougher listen, and sometimes crosses the line into relentless racket. The Violin's other guitarist Stoogie Morrison figures strongly here. And the supreme sex of Terry Jennings flutters over Cale's organ cha-cha. 1965's "Big Apple Express" is premium gradio screaming feedback wail over a waka rhythmic cycle – you can hear Cale is really getting somewhere, until he's interrupted by a firman from the station downstairs, threatening Cale with physical violence.

**CORNELIUS CARDEW**  
**CHAMBER MUSIC 1955-1964**  
MATCHLESS MRCD49 CD

BY TOM PERCHARD

On this recording, Apartment House play music from the first half of radical English composer Cardew's creative career. During that period, he was grappling with the techniques of both

European and American avant-garde – Stockhausen and Cage – and so much of the music here attempts to marry constructive rigour with sounding indeterminacy. During a panel discussion about Cardew at last November's Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Apartment House's director and cellist Anson Lukossewitz brushed aside a good question about the problems of recording pieces that make such indeterminacy part of their identity. He needn't have been so dismissive. Despite the austerity of its performances, his CD accidentally undermines any claim for its own 'precision' or 'authenticity'. Each track ends off before the sound has died away; the acoustic soundspace interrupted in order to fit more music on to the 74 minute album. It might seem a small point, but clunky editing, along with the slightly boorish sound of the larger ensemble pieces, works to continually remind listeners of the artificiality of their experience, while shaping the recording of any pretense to represent reality.

With hindsight, it's possible to discern pre-echoes of Cardew's later concerns even in the earliest of the pieces here. Three Rhythmic Pieces for Trumpet And Piano (1955) is less transparent and Webernian than much experimental composition of the time. Like his contemporary Hans Werner Henze (another composer who would eventually resource the avant-garde for socialist realism), Cardew seems to want to utilise serialist procedures without maintaining a more traditionally musical feeling of vigour and weight. Similarly, 1961's Piece For Guitar (For Stava) struggles between abstracted intellectualism and simple, tonal expressivity – Cardew's life in microcosm. Here Alan Thomas plays beautifully as he works around fragments of modal form, worried with fuzzy semi-counterpoint yet gentle with tonal cadences.

David Rye's sleeve-note suggests that Cardew's music might be characterised by its relationship between pragmatism and idealism. For the Cardew of the 1950s, pragmatism stood for issues of performance, and idealism for constructive integrity; later, both terms would come to stand for political use value. So it's interesting to hear Cardew addressing musical questions, but, even relatively early in his career, coming up with potentially 'polite/naïf' answers. In Solo And Accompaniment, maniacs of musical symbols replace conventional notation, giving the accompanist a large amount of creative freedom while retaining the composer's organisational principles. A short cadence aside, the soloist repeats a single note throughout – Cardew reducing composed context to a minimum in order to submit a traditional musical hierarchy.

Some pieces don't work. *Mimesis* O' You sounds like it might impress in performance, but it doesn't on disc, the two versions of *Material* sound like mid-period Stockhausen, but without the guilty charm of megalomania. Regardless of the music's qualities, performances are uniformly accomplished, specially Lukossewitz's violent cello and radio realisation of Octet '61. For Jasper Johns.

**CLUB OFF CHAOS**  
**PART ET IMPAR**  
ETERNITY EMITI/EPM0010 CD

BY TOM RIDGE

The selling point is, of course, ex-Can drummer Jaki Liebezeit, whose vigorous percussion drives

and dominates the music of this trip. In his book *Krautrocksample*, Julian Cope recounts how Liebezeit had abandoned his free jazz drumming following an effort to "play monstrously", thus ushering in the monolithic grooves of Can and a host of imitators of variable quality. Club Off Chaos is caught between the opposing urges to either capitalise on this legacy or to diverge from it. Some pieces are indebted to the past, as Boris Peknikau and Dirk Henweg work up an electronic storm of synths and sub bass pulses bound together by Liebezeit's tight grooves. But often the percussion grounds the music in a less welcome fashion, pinning it down when it should really cut loose and soar away. Less streamlined, more angular machine funk electronica patterns leave Liebezeit hanging in limbo, barking away at his drums with disciplined rigidity but unable to drive the music out of its cooties. Part of the problem lies with the limitations of the compositions themselves, where the synths too quickly settle into squally 70s chessiness, oscillating space-rock sounds or Autecine-like clapped edits. Eventually, a dull uniformity of sound sets in, like an extended jam session with no obvious means to terminate itself. At their most extended, Can were capable of surprises even if it meant risking disintegration and collapsing into chaos. Such chaos is sadly lacking here.

**PHILIP CORNER/ALISON KNOWLES/GEORGE BRECHT**  
**FLUXUS**  
VIRGIN VIRGIN122 CD

BY LOUISE GRAY

"Nobody knows who and what Fluxus is," presciently muses and composer George Brecht, one of the founders of the loose 1960s confederation of artists that was Fluxus, to the German radio station WDR in 1963. It's not such a stretch. After all, Fluxus did take its ethos from a post-Cageian idea of framing. If it had been the older composer's genius to suggest that silence was as much a part of music as the sound itself, it was Fluxus who picked up Cage's Zen inclination and effectively animated the picture. In short, Fluxus was a process, as this CD, issued in Wagn's *As Aquatic Series*, neatly underlines. A collection of singular radio plays constructed for WDR in the Cologne station's studio of acoustic art in the early 80s, the three musicians who appear here, were (whatever loose titles Brecht might lay) intimately associated with Fluxus, and this CD underlines the quixotic dynamics of the movement.

Brecht's half-hour *The Way Ham Ming* O' Sung Ts'an is the dominant work, in length at least. A multilingual reading of sections from one of Zen Buddhism's great texts, Brecht inserts pauses – their positions determined by aleatoric operators – to the recordings. The voices ebb and flow, gently washing over one another, as the text is passed between them. Siebenweizen suggest that the piece's form could be compared to that most August of Western structures, the canon. It's a fair suggestion, even if the sound of dripping water, not a score, organises the work. Alison Knowles's *Bean Sequences* is similarly voice-orientated, but the water here is replaced by the periodic shuffles of beans across a surface, with an effect that both recognisably domestic and punctuating. A female voice delivers bean-related proverbs and stories. Its



## John Cratchley finds Evan Parker caught between thought and expression

### EVAN PARKER LINES BURN IN LIGHT

PSI/PSP01 CD

This recording by Evan Parker is the first release on his own new Psi label. It comprises three solo soprano saxophone pieces 'composed by improvising' at St Michael and All Angels Church, Chiswick, London on 11 October 2001. This is not Parker's first foray into imprint ownership, having participated with Derek Bailey in the formation of Incus (that partnership being dissolved at a later date); and other free improv musicians have also taken this route – Eddie Prevost's Matchless or Tim Berne's Screwgun labels, for example. The formula is tried and tested and, in the present climate of global merger and corporate downscaling, financial control and independence have become necessary adjuncts to artistic freedom and the ability to document performance. So, with Martin Davidson's well-established Emaréem label providing the necessary logistical support, Parker has taken the plunge again in order to provide himself a clearly defined and unencumbered channel for releasing the music of his choice. To launch the label, he has produced an initial work of auspicious and rare vintage.

Parker considers the soprano saxophone his principal instrument and solo recital his natural habitat. Though less so recently, the combination has been well documented on past albums such as *Saxophone Solos* and *Monoceros* in the 1970s and *Conic Sections* in the 80s. *Lines Burnt In Light*

therefore brings us right up to date with his current thinking. Recorded just two months before its release date, it puts work into the public domain with immediacy – thoughtfully without subjecting it to interminable market analysis or product strategy. This is a boon for the listener, especially in the field of freely improvised music, where artists can 'move on' almost overnight to new strategies and levels of exploration.

As the Sankt Gerold monastery sessions on ECM or September Dots on Creative Works demonstrate, a sense of place and a heightened level of connection to surroundings are important elements of Parker's overall regimen. Here Parker interprets the "inspiring acoustics" of St Michael and All Angels Church with uncanny accuracy, at once drawing attention and exploring the space's aural potential. Of the three pieces, "Line 1" was recorded without an audience, and Parker's soliloquy has a markedly different feel to "Line 2" and "Line 3", when an audience was present. That difference emerges not so much from an alteration of technique as a careful modulation of projection into the space. All Angels responds in an obviously more open manner when there are no bodies to soak up the sound and the acoustics are purer. Sounds refract and return to the point of emanation with more alacrity and Parker alters his response accordingly. Though the differences are small but discernible, they are an indication of the finesse he intuitively employs.

Parker's disciplined control over, and manipulation of,

his extended technique of cyclical breathing is undiminished and as exciting as ever. The longest improvisation is 27 minutes plus of continuous blowing, and every note, every overtone, every manifestation of idea into sound, is clearly enunciated and differentiated. Essentially, he builds patterns that repeat with constantly fluctuating, minor variation. Over time, they evolve and shift their ground while still retaining a connection to their original point of reference, all the time building a hypnotic, unstoppable momentum. *Lines Burnt In Light* is a fine demonstration of the balance between his thought process and his intuitive articulation. The detail in his playing is urbane and sophisticated, an intellectual response to issues of complexity. Yet the root of his music and technique is elemental, imbuing it with a primordial, spiritual quality. There are points within the improvisations where you begin to wonder whether Parker is playing the music or, like a shaman, the music is playing him. The improvisations are complex but never complicated, demanding an act of faith in surrendering to the maelstrom he creates. It is in the nature of a twister to subsume all in its path, and Parker fearlessly opens himself to all the inherent dangers implied in instinctively unlocking the primitive. Inside, a calm, still centre exists. From the vantage point of this centre, it is possible to engage with the highly refined level of nuance being communicated from within the chaotic form, as well as submit to the mesmeric trance that Parker's music can induce. □

### Will the real Uri Caine please stand up, asks Julian Cowley



**URI CAINE**  
**BEDROCK**  
WINTER & WINTER 910059 CD

**URI CAINE**  
**SOLITAIRE**  
WINTER & WINTER 910078 CD

**URI CAINE**  
**RIO**  
WINTER & WINTER 910079 CD

**CAINE/THOMPSON/MCBRIDE**  
**THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT**  
ROPEADORE 910001 CD

At least Miles Davis had the decency to change his musical persona through time, enabling disgruntled critics to lament the passing of the essential Miles. The simultaneous arrival of four new recordings by Uri Caine highlights the protean unpredictability of this remarkable pianist. He is remarkable – that much is obvious – in terms of his fluency and touch, his conceptual daring and broad stylistic range. Yet that very range can also perplex OK, so we're used to polyphony now. Caine's own neo-baroque take on Bach's Goldberg Variations (Winter & Winter 2000) is a perfect example. But even the success of such polystylistic exercises doesn't dispel the desire to find an essential Uri Caine lurking somewhere beneath the dazzling surfaces.

On Bedrock he fronts a fusion trio, with Zach Danzer on drums and Tim Lefebvre on electric bass. The Fender Rhodes electric piano looms especially large, creating an instant period feel, returning back to Bitches Brew and its many ofshots. Indeed, Herbie Hancock springs to mind most regularly as Caine plays tag with his boisterously funky rhythm section. There's nothing intrinsically retro about the instrument of course, although its glossy, unfjelding timbres sit especially comfortably in the context of the early

1970s. And for the time being the various samples and mediated voices fed in by Danzer and guest DJ Logic (on two tracks) register current tastes, although their impact is decidedly uneven. On "Lobby Daze", Caine injects a dash of superior cocktail jazz, just to add one further question mark. Basically, however, Bedrock is an enjoyable record that thrives in the air of pastiche.

Solitaire is Caine alone and acoustic throughout. He performs 13 of his own compositions, plus Jimmy Van Heusen's "All The Way" and Lennon & McCartney's "Blackbird". It's a dazzling display of technical finesse and improvisational invention. Caine studied composition with George Rochberg and George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania, and was exposed to an enormous range of music written since the European Renaissance. At the same time he was playing club dates with the likes of Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Stanley Turrentine and Lester Bowie. Work experience combined with all that listening to cross-pollinate in his solo playing. Solitaire is like dipping into a compendium of the jazz piano's past. It echoes with memories of Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson, Keith Jarrett and other distinctive figures, interspersed with classical allusion; and it's tailored with a trained composer's sense of formal relationships. Which is to say, it's fabulous in its way, but does it deliver the real Uri Caine?

Or is that to be discovered on Rio instead? Although it was actually recorded in Rio De Janeiro with various groups of Brazilian musicians, including percussionist Paulo Braga, needless to say this is not a homogenised Latino-jazz trip. The shuffling bossa beat is in evidence, but so are vigorous drumming and examples of Rio rap; Caine also takes shots of Cecil Taylor to the carnival. Location recordings of chatter and partying and breaking waves flavour the

atmosphere, a contrived kind of authenticity that for once works just fine. It's a hugely appealing excursion and, like his other Winter & Winter releases, it's beautifully packaged. The Philadelphia Experiment is more modestly housed, but it's by no means a lesser release. Here Caine undertakes a series of adventures closer to home in company with drummer Ahmar Thompson and bassist Christian McBride. The premise is that Philadelphia is recognised worldwide as a vital centre of jazz, classical and HipHop, the intention is to reflect this in the line-up, and in the music they play. On top of Caine originals and group compositions, the set includes readings of Sun Ra's "Call For All Demons", Marvin Gaye's theme from Trouble Man and citizen John's "Philadelphia Freedom". And concealed at the very end of the CD is McBride's extraordinary, apparently throwaway interpretation of the Bill Withers/Grover Washington hit, "Just The Two Of Us". The Fender Rhodes is in evidence once again, alongside a Steinway Grand and a Hammond B-3 Organ. Guests include guitarist Pat Martino. This "experiment" is in many ways the most straightforward of the four releases. The different backgrounds and stylistic agendas of the three musicians intersect in a highly palatable chunk of funky jazz, with Caine's classical credentials largely implicit, Thompson's HipHop rhythms testing conventional jazz ears and McBride astonishing, as ever.

Thinking about storytelling, the novelist John Barth concluded, "The key to the treasure is the treasure." Meaning that the act of narration, in whatever style seems right, is its own justification, rather than being the vehicle for some essential message. That's clearly the best way to approach and enjoy Uri Caine. As this imposing quartet of CDs amply demonstrates, he's no mere PoMo shape-shifter, but a masterly musical storyteller who can do all the voices.

male counterpart describes the chemical properties of the legume family. Whether Kneale is making an implicit gender statement here is unclear. If so, she does it in her guises, as the voices layer themselves into an uneasy unison.

But it's Philip Corner's delicate development of two chords that Erik Satie that tapers over the two other works. Samel's Rose Cross As A Reverie is a slowly wrought piece for piano and voice — Corner's intonation is as spectral as Cage's — almost minimalist in its approach. "Do not be imitated," Corner recites slowly at one point (all the lines come from signs of paper pulled randomly from a hat) and indeed you'd have to be a curmudgeon to take offence. Apparently recorded live at night, it achieves the intimacy — between artist and internet studio and technology — of the best radio work. It reminds you of nothing so much as Glenn Gould's nocturnal hauntings, and it's all the more mesmerising for its richness of atmosphere.

## CYCLOBE

### THE VISITORS

PHANTOM CODE CM002 CD

BY JEROME MAUNSELL

Cyclobe are another branch of the fertile English underground connected with Coil. As a duo, Stephen Thrower (who contributed to Coil's *Sorcery* and *Horse Retribution*) and Simon Nottis (who works with them) delivered their first Cyclobe album, *Luminous Darkness*, in 1999. Like Coil, and others who share their mindset, Thrower and Nottis bring a much-needed dose of mythology and tradition to electronic music, blessing it with depth, inklows, echoes, hidden pathways and magick. Hence their second LP, *The Waters*, recorded this summer and completed on the autumn equinox, aims "to generate an imaginary space for transmitting and receiving alien energies".

Whatever their intentions, the music certainly dabbles in some strange frequencies, often using imaginative pairings of acoustic instrumentation with electronics on long tracks that ebb and flow through long susses and tidal recessions, in an irrational, illogical way. Guests provide violin, cello and handy-gurdy on different pieces, and Thugpavasundari is credited with additional production on one track, while the central duo orchestrate the electronic sepienne crackles, chaotic noise, drones, and other events. Mysteriously eschewing obvious rhythms and beats, the album creates an organic sense of timeliness in moments of microtempo pulse and dissolve, or swell-ing grand sweeps of melody.

The first track, "Sentinels," opens with the sound of surf washing up against the shore, before a wave of drones comes in, bringing with it an array of smashed electric shards, shards of music and noise. Arabic flavours and melodic motifs are introduced, lending a gauderie of scope to the portentous tidal bend of the sepienne instrumentation. Tension tracks are harder to describe — and that's a compliment. Background sounds source and roil into aural focus, tones slide and swoop smoothly across the scale. Things finish on a mere conventional note with the beautiful badawis harmonica and chords of "Replaced By His Constellation," before dissolving once again into the sound of the sea.

## DE LA SOUL

AOI, BIONIX

TOMMY BOY TB10932 CD

BY MOB REVIEW

Boxxx, the second instalment in De La Soul's Art Official Intelligence trilogy, confirms the Long Islanders' mythic status as articulate reseachers. Much of the album's material responds to criticism of its predecessor, Art Official Intelligence. *Mosaic Trump*, as a concession to the rap marketplace, "Unlike these underground MDs who rock for heads/We include the throat, chest, arms, and legs," brags Posdnuos on the title track. The "Reverence Do Good" sees of slots lampoon their old image as Hip-Hop aesthetes. "Peer Pressure" finds Posdnuos and Dave smoking weed under the tutelage of Cypress Hill's B-Real. "See me on the cover of your AOL/taking a holiday at the hotel," Dave raps on "Simpli," which uses Wings' "Wonderful Christmas Time" as a musical backdrop.

De La's embrace of commercial values is admirable, but on Boxxx there's no cavalcade of guest stars to shield them from conventionality, as *Mosaic Trump* almost did. At best, "Simply," "Watts" but a handful of others find them crafting consciously midtempo pop tunes. At worst, they talk out dashi sex romps like "Pawn Star," unable (or unwilling) to admit how they themselves have become pawns, rather than innovators, in the Hip-Hop game.

At stake is whether legends fare of quirky classics like De La Soul's *Des Well* will allow De La Soul to become another empty icon. A final track, "Crying People," indicates the answer is yes. Dave raps, "The skies over your head ain't safe no more/And Hip-Hop ain't your home/And if it's you I'm asking up the curb, son/You make life look like I don't want to live any/easy might as well hold your breath until you die in the corner somewhere bent over in the crevice/This God theory overcomes the worst of weathers/As long as you willing to try/You on a good start, now." Boxxx doesn't exactly picture them walking into the sunset. Indeed, the group's aging audience, more familiar with Native Tongues than Intersections, will find much to like on this model, well-produced effort. But they'll have to accept that the new, mature, De La means traditional pop over break artistry, religion over irony, and conformity over the extraordinary.

## PAUL FLAHERTY &

CHRIS CORSANO

THE HATED MUSIC

EGOISTIC KOD E418/FFPC16 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Saxophonist Paul Flaherty is a significant voice in the New England free scene who's been content to play his own distinctive furrow over the past three decades with nary a nod to the mainstream. He's best known, if at all, for his ongoing series of scratchy earth duets with the drummer Randall Colbourne, but recently his profile comparatively rocketed with some dates supporting Sonic Youth, including a quartet slot at 9/11's first benefit at New York's Bowery Ballroom, where he was joined by Thurston Moore, Jim O'Rourke and drummer Chris Corsano. Corsano is a young, powerful drummer with a good feeling for timbre. On this duo disc he displays it to good effect, matching

Rathery's shepherding brass with speedy splash cymbals and deep thunderous rolls. For this set, Rathery switches between tenor and alto. He's at his most devastating when he's way up register, blowing long, high-pitched phrases that wail like smoke into Corsano's path. The saxophonist has developed an extensive vocabulary utilising gymnastic phantom squeals as effectively as the late Japanese saxophonist Kaoru Abe or US goliath Amiri Doyle. Indeed, Flaherty feels closest in spirit to Doyle here. They both favour raw, direct statement over ornate prodding, and Flaherty has a way of exploding into a track that recalls Doyle's incendiary *Alabama Feeling*. However, Flaherty ultimately boasts a wider variety of approaches and isn't afraid to peacock his frebreathing with sweet singing runs. Still, it's the focused flashes of pure white light that'll keep you coming back, from the stroboscopic beauty of "Incent" at Powder Ridge (*Commodore In A Condom For Melancholy*) through the dual assault of "Closing The Tea Party." Flaherty and Corsano make an infernal tag team.

## MARI FURUTA

CROSSING THERE

GOR ART 001 CD

BY LOUISE GRAY

In a field that demands so much organisation — percussive instruments could be described as the organising backbone of much music — it takes an innovative predisposition to reinvigorate the controls that they might otherwise exert. Japanese composer and percussionist Mari Furuta's *Crossing There* begins with swarms of sound. The title piece, for environmental sound and percussion ensemble, uses edited tape sources, recorded on what's described as "a day of extreme heat" in a Kyoto dojo, as an equal partner to more conventional instrumentation. The listener can discern certain sounds — cans, grinding gears — easily enough, but Furuta's work becomes truly interesting at that point where an elision between the deliberate and the indeterminate occurs. Do the metallic tinishes heard in one section belong to the street scenes heard in a quiet section? Maybe it's the sound of the shimmering heat — a tempest that Furuta might encourage.

For the rest of the recording, her influences are displayed pretty clearly on her drumstiks. Three impressions, for flute, oboe and marimba, move through distinct serial, lyncs and minimalist modes, while Discoscope (for three guitars) and Distance (for bass marimba and vibraphone) both experiment with a more severe kind of economy, in which dynamism and sonic tension play their parts. This would be exciting music to hear live. It has a winning commitment to originality in the sense that Furuta sets up formal structures, no matter how loose or unstructured they may appear, in order to tease out nuances of sound. Discoscope is often two notes with the reverberating interval as the space through which the (imaginary) snowflake can dance. It's about as slow as we can go and the elasticity of the piece is stretched to capacity. Distance can't fail to be a faster affair, and its arpeggiations set up a clarity of instant. What's best, though, is the end, or to be more precise, ns aftereffect, when the ringing of the instruments hangs in the air. As if an inner space has somehow been revitalised.



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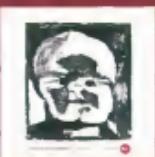
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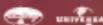
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## FUSHITSUSA ORIGIN'S HESITATION

MPF-PCD010 CD

BY STEPHEN HOBSON

When bresier drummer Ikuo Takahashi announced his retirement from music a couple of years back, at a stroke he'd removed half the groups on the Japanese underground. Keiji Haino's response might have appeared somewhat blood-minded. Haino chose to swap his guitar pick for sticks and, together with longstanding bassist Naohiko Okawa, promptly stripped Fushitsusa down to a duo. Whatever his motivation, proclaiming himself to be the best drummer for Fushitsusa must have sounded like a slight against the remarkable contributions of Takahashi and his predecessor Jun Kosugi. Read this way, Origin's Hesitation, the first Fushitsusa album for almost two years, and their first for MPF since 1994's monumental *Pathos*, should have been an album driven solely by sprawl, rather than what it is: another spellbinding evolution of the group's uniquely dark aesthetic.

Given the solo percussion performances and recordings that already constitute a significant section of Haino's creative output, his decision to eschew the guitar for the drums is only surprising to those who automatically consider the guitar more indispensable than drums. Besides, the pressure towards a guitars-free Fushitsusa was already well underway with the work of the past few years. Interestingly, this process was inaugurated by the first Fushitsusa album to feature the now departed Takahashi, the often overlooked *A Little Longer Thus* (released by the Japanese major Yuraku). That album placed Haino's guitar in an understated and subordinate role to the interaction going on between bass, drums and voice. Though still intensely "rock", the ebbing, asynchronous elisions and shifting time signatures of each individual voicing of that album came closer to Morton Feldman's *Copied Symmetry* than to the stately popular image of Fushitsusa as being solely a "Blue Cheer inspired power trio". Even with Haino's ringing guitar removed, the mammoth double CD, *I See It* (Parrotastic), continued Fushitsusa's destruction of rock's last residual concern: in the process providing the springboard for the duo interaction on Origin's *Hesitation*. This is most evident on the pristine lurch of the 18 minute "Gensis: No Tomando" and its sister track "Futatsu Anri", both of them as dense, difficult and beautifully brittle as anything in the Fushitsusa canon. On this evidence, Fushitsusa are as elemental as, physical, yet as otherworldly as ever, still striving to grasp the same spectral presence that has haunted all their work. However, Origin's *Hesitation* also introduces a difference: Haino's shift to the drum stool has provided the occasion for different working practices, with both men utilising time samples, triggering loops of skittering cymbals, rhythmic drums, subterranean bass and churring, whooping, warbling vocal parts. Each of these elements fold back and entwine themselves chokingly around a sound that is both sharply muffled and claustrophobic. These loops are indelible/available from their source, at times rippling and rising dinkily as if through obscured glass, at others brutally, unerringly and starkly illuminated. Leading one breathlessly towards the presence of the ineffable, the 24

minute closing track, "Yume Ga Sute Ni Shugo" (O Naniwa Shimaoka Koto), is a dissolution rather than a conclusion. As it ebbs away, it dissolves all definition into a spectral hiss. And that other great absence, Haino's guitar, is referenced here only by the heatedly jagged surge of amp noise which provides the thematic link between each of these six pieces and the album's final song, it leaves one feeling that Fushitsusa could dissolve themselves, and with them every conceivable configuration of a rock power trio, into nothing more than a ghostly presence. As ever, the Fushitsusa of Origin's *Hesitation* is beautifully, brutally, unique.

## M GIRA & D MATZ

WHAT WE DID  
YOUNG GOD YG-17 CD

BY TOM HAYNES

During one of the final Swans tours across the US, leader Michael Gira employed the Texan post-rock ensemble Windsor For The Debey as support. Up until the collaboration between Gira and the latter's Don Matz, Windsor had appeared to be an unlikely choice, as Swans' might and emotional catharsis clearly overwhelmed Windsor's prouder, relentless and understated, minimalist punctuations. Yet in the synthesis of *What We Did*, it becomes clear that Swans and Windsor merely took different approaches towards the same impetus to control sound in order to communicate through it. Where Gira's late period Swans built a furious tono-rock from biopic slabs of hypnotic guitar noise to augment his poetic mythologies of sex, hate, love and death, Windsor rendered an idea of the sublime through the surgical removal of bombast and a technically precise application of mathematical compositions. Thus, Gira could be seen as the Shaman, and Matz the Anthropologist.

To a certain extent, Gira's collaboration with Matz picks up where Swans left off with their tense, driving grooves. Yet, Gira is speaking truthfully when he said *What We Did* was founded on mutual respect. As testimony to such claims, the album opens with "Pecing The Ladies", a duet that sets Matz's whispered vocals against Gira'sognited tenor while the two share guitar duties, gently strumming through their spartan chords. Almost immediately, "4 Lines" could have been lifted from Gram Parsons' songbook. Backed by a loomotimethmed arrangement with its mandatory clawed guitar picking and steam whistle harmonica, Gira posesses himself at the train station waiting for the love of his life coming down the tracks – only to gleefully spoil the image with the reality of how contemporary romance is now transcribed "down through the optic line, then sifted through the screen".

While Matz and Gira offer up a few tracks like "4 Lines", the most entralling moments here are when the two lock into taut grooves and extended appoggiaturas that incrementally multiply in density, bringing the song to a crescendo. "Iy Was" begins with a repetition of a plaintive Delta blues chord, with a sustained organ drone, followed by the trilling of a vibraphone. Matz's voice joins Gira's, and so on, until the song becomes a very jolly constructed mass of nervous rhythms. "17 Hours", for guitars, drum machine and organs, increases the tension considerably, but with far more rigidity and entrapment in the arrangement.

## HAMMILL/SONIX UNSUNG

MPF-PCD124 CD

BY TOM RIGGE

In his sleepwalks Peter Hammill refers to this instrument set as the third in "an unconscious series" of albums (*After Loops And Roots* and *Sonic*). Most of it sounds fragmentary, hesitant, the results of studio manipulation serving a micro view of textures and effects. With the artist's energies focused on short passages of music – often little more than edits of treated guitar chords or extended keyboard drones – the usual big picture fails to materialize. "Delinquent" and "Handsize" are sonic doldrums, sketches in miniature, the latter apparently the product of a genuine moment of statebound serendipity due to Hammill leaving his MIDI player hooked up to his computer's printer port. "Exult" uses vanosped loops to boost its percussive intensity into a inverted pulse before collapsing on itself. The extended, wavering chords of "West Folk" form a calm, Ambient passage. The best of these pieces possess a dreamlike logic, sometimes barely formed but with an edgy, exploratory feel. Elsewhere, more conventional instrumental passages expand into short,Prog flavoured themes: "Gate", "Gothess" and "I My Loop" are conventional if overcooked. Hammill's reliance on treated guitars and keyboards tends to blend everything into a rich sonic mush. His daughter, Holly, has written one track, "Jebibus", a woozy, swaying blues blazed by layers of keyboards until it melts down into liquid insubstantiality before warring off into airshots. The result is like a mini-Prog symphony. Though the album is occasionally diverting, this is one for Hammill's competitors.

## JONATHAN HARVEY TRIO FIBONACCI

ATMA CLASSIQUE AC3584 CD

BY BEN WATSON

Lacking sensitivity to the semantics of mass marketing, classical releases are usually weird nightmares, but the booklet here includes a surprisingly attractive photograph of the composer in rehearsal with Yoel Fibonaci (André Rieu on piano, Gabriel Prym on cello and Julie-Anne Desrée on violin). They don't look as if they are posing for Hello magazine, but relaxed, cheerful and productive. The trio obviously adore the elderly composer (Harvey was born in Sutton Coldfield in 1939), and he's delighted with their playing. The pieces were written at various dates between 1967 and 2000, all characterised by the detail, variety, economy, grace and risk that Harvey is celebrated for. The performances are with ovacy.

Harvey is an unrepentant modernist. *Vers* (2000) was written for Pierre Boulez. *Janus De Messiaen* was named for the precess of serialism. *Piano Solo* (1971) uses three- and four-note cells, finally amalgamating them into a Scherzogesang. 12 tone row. Harvey's lack of compromise connects him to key composers outside the academy in *Adagio* (1994), observational affinities to a single note – the A of the cello (220 Hz) – recalls Gacuro Sozzi. Harvey's brilliant use of mixed electronics revises ideas not heard since Jacob Druckman's *Anoush* (1966). The amping-up piano section of *7emebeau* extends ideas introduced by Conlon

Nancarrow, and bears comparison to the futurist synths of Muhal Richard Abrams ("Imagin" on Songs For All) and Frank Zappa ("I'm With Wings" on Civilization, Volume II).

The goal of classical musicianship may be timeless elegance, but no one avoids the dialectic of the world spirit. From the first notes, it's obvious that André Ristic has a powerfully rhythmic drive; the sense of swing which Stravinsky had to beat his musicians over the head to achieve. On Plane Tri, Harvey has the musicians play in different tempos: the rhythmic coordination has a syncopated subtlety and muscle rare in classical music. It's hard to credit that the speedy, high passages for violin and piano – intricate and slyly squatless for the attentive ear – are being played in real time.

Harvey is celebrated for his intimate splice of acoustic performances with electronic sounds. His secret is exceptionally clear-eyed analysis of note frequencies and acoustics; it's possible to be merely charmed by the twinkles and twitches of his soundworld. Nevertheless, the speed-up parts of Reverbous has the kind of experimental barbsom – "this is where my thoughts are going, hang it if it doesn't sound like 'music' any more" – which makes early Stockhausen and Boulez. The piece's rock-solid sense of time disrupted with the piano's asymmetrical runs and snares bears comparison to Jerry Lee Lewis Sun recordings: that high praise both for Ristic and the sympathetic parsing of Harvey's score.

The CD finishes with Flight-2000 for violin and piano. A dull conclusion after the electronic fireworks? Far from it. Here Harvey pushes his instruments to extremes – the violins creating an exasperated palimpsest of melancholy lyricism, the pianist reaching inside his instrument to evoke distant thunder and imperial gongs. Harvey makes acoustic music sound electronic and vice versa, a timely assertion of intelligence and ear response over Techno-festive categories.

### ICP ORCHESTRA OH MY DOG!

ICP 40 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

This title recalls the old joke (perhaps Woody Allen's?) about the dyslexic aghast who lies awake all night wondering whether there's a Dog. Comparable musical puns and barbs juxtapose on material at the heart of this thought-provoking CD that poses important questions about the nature of musical material and parody in, to adopt Walter Benjamin's phrase, "the age of mechanical reproduction". We're presented with a dazzling variety of references – Renaissance counterpoint bumps against cold-Bud Powell piano and Albert Ayler-like decoration. The Country band that Charles Ives uses in Three Places in New England matches past and then's a host of Jerry Roll Morton's "Spanish trout" in a Latin American session. All this material is reshaped through the experience of musicians who we would generally categorise as "free improvisers". But what's to stop the "free improvisation" from being taken as ironic too?

The Dutch ICP Orchestra (Instant Composers Pool Orchestra) is organised by Mischa Mengelberg and Ben Berney. Reedman Michael Moore is a frequent member and this latest recording also involves the excellent British

violinist Moy Oliver, trumpeter Thomas Heberer, bassist Tzalat Hossenagi and others. "Witts Down Exactly" is an ebullient opener, anchored by Berney's bellicose drums, but it's the second track "A Close Encounter With Charlie's Country Band" in which the stylistic blurring starts. Heberer's piece emerges from a barrage of scratchy noise and is quickly pulled to bits by percussive clatter and catenaweeding violin improvisations. His node-hesitant humour and playful inventiveness of the improvisation prevents it from becoming the rather superficial, slightly patronising parody of "fodors" that Peter Maxwell Davies wrote in St Thomas Wake – this is a freshly improvised regeneration of an earlier tradition.

"A La Russa" sounds like the sort of recomposed realisation of Henry Purcell that Maxine I Davies pioneered in the 1960s, while "Babel Agent" reveals the highly stylised linguistic nonentities of Ligeti's *Aventures et Nouvelles Aventures*. Hearing Mischa Mengelberg suddenly break into straight "changed jazz" passes the buttons of yet another tradition. And here's the punchline – the moments of "free" improvisation heard in this stylistically shifting music emphasise the level of gestural tradition that their music has built up over years. This was broadly John Cage's argument against supposedly "free" improvisations, and by placing it up against a whole load of other traditions, ICP Orchestra explicitly acknowledges the fact so they can start building a language anew. At least that's what I took from this CD's witty, creative but above all, responsible post-modernism.

### GIUSEPPE IELASI & DOMENICO SCIACINO

#### RIGHT AFTER

ERTWHILE 020 CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

There's a new aesthetic in improvised music; technical concerns for pitch (Sousaïsky's "je de notes") and form (climax/decay/surprise) are gone, and texture and structure (event-density) are the new parameters – to borrow the term beloved of the Osmannstadt generation. Just as their total serialism became the language of the postwar avant-garde, high register bleeps and white noise slices have become to electroacoustic improv what crackly Stax samples were to mid-90s trip hop.

If earlier generations of improvisors were turned on by Ligeti and Penderecki, Megs's Christian Fenner and Peter Rehberg seem more relevant to today's players, who have moved as much upon the sound of the current laptop world as its juxtapost aesthetic. For several years Giuseppe Ielasi has been exploring this territory both as a performer on guitar and, here, electronics, and through his aptly named Fringes label, and this cutting with composer and bassist (but here lapped) Domenico Sciaino is as finely crafted and diverse as Fredrikke Fiebeldt's cover art, a geometrical montage of architectural perspective drawings opening up to reveal a rich, golden honey pot. Similarly, the music is about angles and stages, but also colour and broad brushstrokes. Contrary to what you might think, it's eminently listenable, colourful and highly enjoyable, an exhilarating scrub of an album – seemingly unctuous but shot through with tiny abrasive particles to stimulate the inner ear.

### INFERNAL NOISE BRIGADE INSURGENT SELECTIONS FOR BATTERY AND VOICE

BY BEN WATSON

Infernal Noise Brigade are Seattle's anti-capitalist revolutionaries – drummers, big corps, rifle twirlers, megaphone, sound cart etc. They steal Costa Coffee's lame logo and propose something truly insidious. They resemble the East London Bafflers led by radical anthropologist Chris Knight, who's been injecting interesting Bo Diddley rhythms into left mobilisations since the mid-90s. These are not paying gigs. Some members of INB stagecoach on the margins, others deliver packages, drive taxis or answer phones. The opener, "Naganawasaki" is a rhythm from the Mughals of North West India, though pop listeners would call it Burundi. This and the next eight tracks were recorded for broadcast on Sonarchy Radio on 7 July 2001. Studio-mixed to project the drive from transition with maximum effect, the effect is like a *Teddy 12"*: the music is dry and limited, made a resource for a live DJ that afternoon entertainment.

It is only on track ten – a maimed aural collage of the anti-capitalists in Prague on 26 September 2000 – that we hear the stomach-tightening sound of mass demonstrators and drummers and police in real space. The effect is utterly different: you can no longer predict what will happen next, and the listening is tense (for an hour's worth of seat thrills, see Christopher Deafarent's amazing N30, reviewed *The Wire* 203). Then there's a satirical vocal track as the INB sell themselves as a force to "week corporate parties" in the ingurgitating tones of radio commercials. Unfortunately, because of the sloppiness and rather smug way it's done, this resort to adephobia feels more like people than on ideas than *situationist* documentation, which proceeded from rigorous analysis. (Read Vereneig in there in a booklist alongside Noam Chomsky and Edward Said). When INB print "Post World Industries is a distribution point for all your radical content needs, supplying a variety of political and cultural works" on the back, it's no satire. What if my "radical content need" was for a release which had a spontaneous relationship to its listener and provoked critical thought – ie stimulated my own radical productivity? I'm not sure INB could help – at least, not on CD.

These drum orchestra not only sound terrific on any-capitalist demo, but their ability to dispel boredom and move crowds aware of their mass is crucial. However, you've got to include that data: in a recording, Deafarent's N30 was brilliant because he had been in the frontline; if I'm going to listen to radical drummer in a studio, I think I'd prefer Max Roach or Tony Oxley to it. OK to admit a group and diss the CD? Maybe it's like what Malcolm McLaren said on the release of "Anarchy in the UK": "The real fans aren't buying the single."

### INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER SOV GOT ROSE-MARIE SILENCE SRSCD0616 CD

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International Harvester "meant death", explains the booklet. "Death to the Western culture. Death



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to all lands of borders?" They were founded around the dawn of the 70s by Swedish avant-drapo Bo Anders Persson in the wake of the dissolution of his first group, the now legendary Prague Sound, whose archaic recordings were released on CD this year by Subliminal Sounds (see The Ecstatic Society feature, The Wire 230). Persson had been studying at The Royal Academy Of Music in Stockholm when minimalist composer Terry Riley visited in 1967, performing a variant of his In C with the students there. Riley's repetitive drone music drew open Persson's ears. He had long been suffocating in the stiff academic atmosphere of the academy, where he had begun formulating rhythmic music with an inherent folk sensibility. Persson took Riley's techniques and married them to thuggish Rolling Stones riffs to birth the new mutant form that eventually became the first Pillar Sound. Assembled from a freak cast of saxophonist, drummer, bassist, violinist and celeste, alongside himself on guitar, and they began jamming in the academy's basement. They mutated into International Harvester sometime in 1968, recording two blistering albums, 1968's Sov Gett Rose-Mine and 69's Hermit, by which time they went out as Harvester.

Sov Gett Rose-Mine, in particular, still sounds like nothing else: Heavy punk-primitive rifling recasting 1965 Velvet Underground circles around psychogenic single note suns and churning strings to create a dark apocalyptic atmosphere, as Persson repeatedly cries, "It's getting late now!" Great passages of pot-holed communal chanting sound like Tokyo's Ghost at their most ecstatic. Elsewhere, there are moments of beautiful melancholy and bleak folk songs like the haunting title track, which sounds grieved and faded by the decades. When they move up a gear they sound like a jagged Neil Young burning up the highway. The live cuts are particularly beguiling, especially the acoustic intermission, "How To Survive," recorded beneath open skies with the group regularly drowned out by the barking of dogs and children shrieking.

Hermit, their second and final album, sees them move further into folk terrain, though the air is still seismically thick with a vaguely menacing communal feel. Steve Chapman of Nause With Would has long been championing International Harvester and on this evidence, it's not hard to see why.

## GREG KELLEY & JASON LESCALLETT FORLORN GREEN

ERSTWHILE 010 CD

BY DAVID WARBURTON

The press release is disingenuous in describing Forlorn Green as "lo-fi". Even if Jason Lescalliet's work involves tape loops using cheap recording gear and "trashy" speakers, his digital reworking and mastering are painstakingly perfectionist – and perfect. Recorded in four different locations in the Boston area – a church, a gallery, an art school and the local Twisted Village record store – and crafted with loving care in Lescalliet's studio, the sonic alchemy of this work is breathtaking. Almost all the material was sourced from Greg Kelley's extraordinary trumpet playing, recorded onto microcassettes and morphed by Lescalliet into soundscapes that will have you pinching yourself in disbelief – is it a double bass? A conchobass clarinet? A

faghorn? A helicopter? Though predominantly slow moving and spacious, there's nothing chilled out and soporific here. Instead, you get a frantic attention on the part of the musicians to details not only of structure and timbre, but also (are these days) pitch. This is the new musique spectroscopie – describing this as "improvised music" is strictly untrue, and moreover fails to do justice to Lescalliet's meticulous montage. There's a truly three-dimensional sense of depth to the mix. (Jacinto Sotelo's idea of spherical sound comes to mind), and even if these guys can hear it up when they want to – witness Kelley's scratching work on Paul Racierty's The Eye (Tres Bambos) and Lescalliet's teeth-grinding noisefield with Ross Lessard in Due Process – that violence is here channelled into something quiet but equally intense. There are occasional disturbing moments – the joltingly flatutes and growls of "Night Spot" – but, with its skily paling distant tresses, the final, exultant "Autumn Leaves" is as rich and dark as Audrey Lescalliet's gorgeous cover art.

## KONK PACK

### WARP OUT

CDRS 333 CD

BY BEN WATSON

Konk Pack are an uneven proposition live. The presence of percussionist Roger Turner means there is always something febrile and unpredictable to watch, but the contributions from Tom Hodgeson on flat guitar, electro-clarinet, and Thomas Lehrn on analogue synth, often seem jumbled and confused. Hodgeson and Lehrn are so keen on subtending the musical flow that aside from rather obvious use of dynamics – begin with spooky whispers, drama in aggressive shouts – they do not seem particularly alive to the situation. As with Obama Yoshida's Gondz Zero, there is something rather weird about the resulting accumulation of bizarre and processed sounds. Any sound made in a theatrical space (and every CD offered for sale has a conceptual prosenium arch hanging over it) will evoke a feeling, but if the noises are steamed at you randomly – not so that they reveal the beauty of idiosyncrasy, but as if they are earnestly expressive – one can lose patience. Here the musicians do not appear to be occupying the same harmonic and rhythmic space. Looking any relation, the sounds appear bald and harsh.

This studio recording was made in Potodom in June 2001. Maybe the mixing and mastering has obscured the logic of the original playing. Or wrapped up in their pedigree, Hodgeson and Lehrn simply lack the alacrity to bring out the best in Turner. Warf Out's heap of sounds is so disappointing I found myself replaying CDs of Turner with Phil Minton and Martin Walker in order to remind myself why I admire his playing.

## BRETT LARNER ITADAKIMASU: IMPROVISED DUETS 1994-2000

SPQR/LINE SPL114 CD

BY DAVID ELLIOTT

A long-time resident of Japan but now based in the San Francisco Bay area, Brett Lerner continues his exploration of that most Japanese

of instruments, the koto. Over many years, Lerner has dabbled with a wide range of musics, extending the boundaries of possibility for the 13 string instrument: its 17 string bass brother, or its 21 string Chinese equivalent, the ga zheng.

On *Itadakimasu* (in French, 'bon appetit'), in English 'get stuck in', Lerner has selected ten tracks, untilted duets covering seven years. koto and electric guitar play by Lenn MazzCane Connors (97). Most pieces, however, were recorded in 2000 while Lerner was still living in Tokyo, amongst other things organising the Delese series of improv concerts, the recorded fruits of which were reviewed in The Wire 212. Improvising alongside other instruments, Lerner extends the koto's every single parameter. Strings are plucked, scraped and bowed, and the wooden body similarly abused. That said, my favourite is his duo with GE Stroum's glasso-guitar, where his koto actually sounds like a koto.

Not so the 3" CD, *Acoustic Sine Wave Drone*, a 21 minute improvisation recorded live at the Artpark in Oakland, California. Here Lerner plays the 21 string *gu zheng*. 'Play' is hardly the word. 'Strangled' perhaps, but then not clumsily with much agitation of strings. Rather, this is a clinical two thumbs to the throat, resulting in an eerie, high pitched and painfully slow suffocation. Think of Pauline Oliveros and Tony Conrad dueling on wire glasses, remixed by Alvin Lucier.

## HUGH LE CAINE COMPOSITIONS DEMONSTRATIONS 1946-1974

JAZZ MUSIC JAZZIA CO

BY CLIVE BELL

Imagine, if you will, the sound of three Canadian atomic physicists jamming live in 1946. One is a jazz pianist and, in his spare time, has invented the world's first voltage controlled synthesiser. He has christened it the Electronic Sackbut. He is playing a jazz bass on the piano while his colleague coaxes an imitation trumpet solo from the Sackbut.

The sound of belling crackling is the unheard backdrop to Hugh Le Caine's collection of bits and pieces from the stone age of electronic instruments. Le Caine certainly had a sense of humor: his response to barking dogs singing "Jingle Bells" was to construct a version of "Happy Birthday" using Lulu's soprano scream from Alvin Lee's opus, "an even more irritating sound" than the dogs, according to Le Caine. He also had the inventor's sustaining faith that one day all this messy soldering and abstruse perversions of electricity would achieve its apothecies in a domestic product that everyone would take for granted. The demonstration tapes for his 'heat' Synthesia Organ (great name for a synth) are full of his voice reassuring the listener that his mad new noises are sensible and serve practical purposes.

Le Caine is one of electronics' forgotten men, and it feels satisfying, if a little inevitable, that after his death in 1977 someone eventually found a cassette box full of tapes in his basement. He saw himself as an inventor and developer of instruments rather than a composer, and regarded all his compositions simply as demonstrations. Nevertheless, 1955's "Dipsody", built from the recording of a single drop of water hitting a bucket, is claimed here as "the most played

example of massive concrete". 1969's "Totem", for trombone sounds, recalls the light touch of Frank Zappa in his *Uncle Meets Peanut Butter* ("Nocturne"), designed to show how the conductivity of the performer's finger effects sound on La Cane's Conductive Keyboard, a very pretty piece.

"Safin" (1964) is Ambient music, clouds of sine tones generated by the Sonde keyboard. And 1963's "Sounds to Forget" shows a stereo demagogation record, something I just heard DJ Rob Swift do on Herbie Hancock's new album.

Le Cane was a master of brevity, and there are 38 short tracks here. Some are brainy trash, others can stand on their own artistic merit. And the inventor's likeable biffin personality comes across throughout.

## MISHA MENGELBERG

### FOUR IN ONE

SONGWRITER SOUNDSA1935-CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Misha Mengelberg was involved in the absurdist Fluxus movement in the early 60s, and appeared in 1964 on Eric Dolphy's classic *Last Date*, recorded in Holland. (In truth, there was a later last date recorded in Paris, but with an inferior group.) He also played in 1983 on Rieggeration, the classic Max's Herbie Nichols tribute with Steve Lacy and Russell Rudd. In both cases the drummer was Ben Berney, who also appears on *Four in One*. As with his Dutch colleague, an affinity for the absurd shouldn't be taken to undermine Mengelberg's serious artistry. This disc, which also features Dave Douglas on trumpet and Brad Jones on bass, sees him in more serious jazz vein, signified by the presence of two other Max pieces aside from the title track. All other compositions are by the leader.

Mengelberg first got together with Dave Douglas for some duo gig. The quartet then performed in New York's Indium before entering the recording studio. Their opening track, "Hypothemamuzefuz", appeared on the Eric Dolphy album *Heee It's* — conceived to set Mr ED a little off balance", the pianist writes, and he's right to add that "somewhere the time still works". "Kwee P Kwean" is dedicated to South African saasie and Blue Notes member Duke Pukeme. "Kneebus" expands on a free feeling, before turning into a bouncy, catchy up-tempo swing number. Mengelberg is a musician more than a pianist; his lines modulate, thembar, but otherwise bee in every way, and admirably complemented by Dave Douglas' Berney's beautiful time, feel and touch are uniminished. An Improv-affirming, life-affirming release.

## THE NOTWIST

### NEON GOLDEN

CITY ISLAND 2014 CD/CD

BY TOM RIDGE

The very precise and direct quality of the songs on the sixth album from this German quartet partially obscures the interesting live electronic juxtapositions gene in their construction. While much has been made of Reichardt's appropriation of experimental electronics to add texture to the songs on *Kai A* and *Anemone*, The Notwist have fully integrated it into the structure of their songs without toppling them into abstraction. Because Neen Gekken is transparent song based, the use of different textures is compartmentalized, carefully tailored to fit into the demands of the individual songs.

Initially their methods are fairly straightforward, but repeated listening reveals a greater complexity in their skillful integration of live and electronic elements. The use of strong and harsh arrangements further widens the sound without swamping it. Meanwhile, Markus Achter's plaintive, low key singing suits the understated quality of the music as the album unfolds.

"One Step Inside" and "Roaring Head" are modern folk songs combining pop hooks and percussive, electronic glitches with a sense of immediacy and intimacy. "Pilot" and "One With the Freaks" tougher sounding and more direct, contrasting with the lush romanticism and dub balladry of "Soltana" and the irresistible melancholia of "Consequence". "Off The Rails" is an appropriately off-kilter collision between state beats and samples, a lyrical electronic melody and a minimalist string arrangement, while the title track combines toables, scratchy Ambient noise and jazzy rhythms in a more stretched out, jazz-influenced composition. What started out so unassuming turns oddly complex.

## PLUS-TECH SQUEEZE BOX

### FAKEVOX

SUR LA PLAGE SLURP997 CD

BY STEVE BARBER

Tokyo, like a handful of other modern cities, exercises a cultural magnetism that pulls every description of human creativity and endeavour into its economic black hole. Like most block holes, very little escapes its implusions of activity, which can only be detected by the most astute observers. The latest venture attempting to escape Tokyo's black hole pull with a haul of megaboothoomous sounds is London's Sur La Plage label, carrying *Fakevox*, the debut from Plus-Tech Squeeze Box (PTSB), a Tokyo trio producing a new strain of pop experimentalism beyond the migration of the trend West. PTSB are Tomomi Reijo-hisa, Junko Kamada and Takeshi Wakaya. They record for Tokyo's Woom Sound label along with Fab Cashion and PATE (Pop, Art, Tradition, Experiment).

*Fakevox* clocks in at just over 32 breathless minutes. Creating the effect of a rapidly twisting sonic kaleidoscope, perplexing and engrossing, or a shertbet for the ear, fizzy and sweet, this is one way to achieving giddiness without resorting to Glass A Drug. The opening "Channel N 1" could be Coldcut for the new breakfast generation. "Early Axess" turns out more breakbeat than breakbeat, and its "easy" vocal line skims on the energy of its three chord riff like the most moist straight edge hardcore. Put together a whole set of modern influences (Staniolab, Aphex Twin, Manley Man, Luke Vibert), who in turn trace their own lineage (sci-fi soundtracks, Disney, Esquivel, Caverneous expansive and tension, Tropicalia), and the pair at the end of PTSB's bowling alley come into view. Although most tracks have English titles — "White Dope", "Scene 2 — Citybyb Lived Happily Ever After", "MILK TEA" — the lyrics are delivered in classic pop tradition, multiple layers will leave you delightfully baffled as to what they're going on about.

## STEVE REICH

### TRIPLE QUARTET

NONESUCH 793919642 CD

BY PHYL CLARK

This release of Steve Reich's latest piece for The Kronos Quartet coincides with the release

elsewhere of Kronos's recording of Terry Riley's *Requiem For Adlers*. The two pieces will deal in the repeating modules of melodic material that led to the categorisation "minimalist", but both are showing decidedly maximalist tendencies these days. The Riley composition draws on academic fugal techniques and Latin harmonies — there's even a joyful New Orleans funeral march. Its rich, buoyant structure results from the lyrical juxtaposition of such clashing material. For his part, Reich has been listening to Bandik and Schmitti and they've both found their way into this new piece. But Reich approaches stylistic inquiry in a very different way.

In a recent interview, John Adams categorized himself as the "off the peg" three movement structure of his *Wahn Konzert*, and it's tempting to put Reich's *Triple Quartet* with a similar brush. The fast-slow-fast shape of the piece feels oddly inappropriate to such a personal mélange of sources and it doesn't let the music speak with the distinctiveness it might. This is a pity because there are some magical moments. The slow movement is based on a twirling, coiled line that has Alfred Schnittke's fingerprints all over it. It proceeds canonically, with tantalizing rhythmic opaqueness, even as it exists in a taut and dismally expressionist soundscape that cries out for more extensive development. And just when it seems we're about to get it, the rhythmic edge of the last movement are sheathed on top and the spell is lifted. Likewise, the opening movement of the work is Reich as we've always known him — harmonically sophisticated and rhythmically compelling, but it's reinventing the wheel. The triple Quartet shows a composer on the brink of a stylistic crisis.

The rest of the CD offers new perspectives on old favorites. This version of *Music For Large Ensemble* restructures Reich's original orchestration of the piece, the added string, voice and soprano saxophone parts giving it a more obstreperous personality. Alan Paschon directs the combined Alarm Will Sound and Ossia ensembles with exemplary receptiveness to the directional force of the score. Reich's sonorously orchestrated brass checks have never sounded so opulent and bell-like. Tokyo/Nearkeit Counterpoint rewards the heavily overdubbed flute piece *Memoria*. Counterpoint to the clipped, watery tones of Mike Yoshida's MIDI minstrel, Reich notes himself that Yoshida's version "has a sense of humour", surely something of an understatement as this performance has all the tongue in cheek mischief of Thelonious Monk growing at a standard. *Electric Guitar Phase* — a new version of *Holin Phaser* for guitarist Dominic Frasca — is a more buttoned down and pure exploration of Reich's phase patterns. The sound of the four long, double-stopped violins heard in the original version could be too acidic, a problem this new version doesn't entirely solve.

## HOWARD RILEY

### AIK PLAY

SLAM 744 CD

BY JUAN COWLEY

HOWARD RILEY TRIO

OVERGROUND

EMMAN 4054 CD

BY JUAN COWLEY

Given the British pianist Howard Riley is one of the most dedicated, accomplished and consistently interesting musicians currently performing, it's amazing that his name gets



tim hecker : haunt me cd  
fancy:



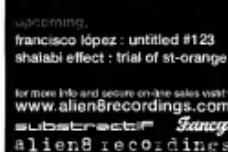
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memorized (let alone celebrated) so rarely. Two new releases and a batch of reissues offer a forceful reminder of his stature and how he has honed and deepened his improvising skills for more than 30 years. His early 1980s piano duet with jazz veteran John Bynum likely won critical acclaim, but it's his solo investigations of the instrument, starting with the recently issued *Singleness* (1994, Jazpm/P110 CD), that mark Riley out as a musician of real distinction.

*Ar Play*, the latest in that series, is one of the finest and most immediately accessible. Riley was a key player in the consolidation of British free improvising, and the exceptionally disciplined shaping of his early solos sought no permission outside of their own internal necessities. The idiomatically grounded playing on this studio recording from April 2000 moulds lessons learnt at those blistered outbursts into terms that any jazz piano enthusiast should relish. The phrasing is boldly defined, with strong left-hand figures functioning as a brilliantly inventive rhythm section or punctuating rugged harmonies. The sense of time is flexible and dramatic. Themes crystallise, then undergo subtle changes of state as purgent chordal clash and Crash. And the set as a whole is superbly measured, the terms of its development are discernible, its changes ring true. It's possible to detect traces of fellow pianists from Cecil Taylor to Bill Evans, but Riley's own signature is deeply etched across the entire 53 minutes.

The music on *Overboard* was recorded in 1974-75 and is now issued for the first time. Riley holds an outstanding bass, with Barry Guy on double bass and Tony Oxley on percussion and live electronics. After the self-sufficiency of *An Play*, it's good to be reminded of Riley's adaptive skills as a group member, and after the jazz virtuosity of his solo set, it's good to be reminded of his resourcefulness in a still more expansive improvising context. On three pieces (one of which uses a graphic score) the musicians feed off their trust in one another, stretching outwards. At times, each explores pedal-controlled amplification to extend the electric vocabulary, and the use each finds them on intriguingly abstract terrain. In a duet, Riley's intense, percussive hammering against Oxley's more oblique percussive construction.

The remaining track, "Recognition", is Riley overdueling a duet with himself. An elaborate and compelling extension of this idea can be heard on *Insect* (recorded in 1980 for Impulse and resissued on CD by JazzyPart) where three layers of solo piano produce a rich, sculpted ensemble sound. It also is fascinating to compare that 1975 duet with the process or shared discovery documented on *Fritz Encounter* (1981) and *Interchange* (1993, both also on JazzyPart), his recordings with Keith Tippett, an equally distinguished and stylistically sympathetic pianist.

# JONTY SEMPER KENOTAPHION

LÜCÜS+CHAHIRM KENDİ ZE

JONTY SEMPER  
© 2013 Jonty Semper

ONE MINUTE SILENCE FROM  
THE FUNERAL OF DIANA,  
PRINCESS OF WALES

www.scholarly-edition.com

Almost every November since 1919, two minutes' silence has been observed as

Rememberance Sunday to commemorate the British Empire's million soldiers killed in World War One. In 1928 the BBC broadcast its first live service from the Cenotaph on the cusp of Parliament Square and Whitehall, London. Jony Soper has spent four years gathering all known recordings of this event onto a double CD. The earliest is a 1929 British Monogram re-enacted broadcast, followed by radio and TV recordings, often giving very different versions of the same service. Along the lines of Cage's '4'33", the recordings consist with contingent sounds, the heavily textured gain of the technology as well as the expressive effect of time on the source material. Each opens with the boom of cannon and Big Ben striking 11 o'clock, usually desolating but occasionally mated in the distance. Some are only a few seconds long, but many last the full two minutes. At times the broadcasts cannot bear the wail and kill it with a wackover or pedale, while in the 1930s sooty orchestra strings helped soothe the trauma in recent times, details of silences scattered with bussing have been reproduced in stereo, and extraneous sounds like waves lapping against a beach, have been overblown, giving lie to the static (and truth) to the key of field recordings.

The understanding of how sound can negatively

The understanding of how sound can socialise has been rapidly brought home by numerous observations of silence to commemorate the dead of 11 September in 1997 something similar occurred when public grief secularised the ritual of Princess Diana's death. Semper has already released a 7" of the minute's silence he recorded as part of the crowd in Hyde Park. Four years in the making, *Kerophaphon* pushes the concept far beyond the isolated process of insuring via a fascinating aesthetic. Instead it is a social document. It informs the present with a retrospective symbolism that went undistorted for generations. While the tradition's historical specificity remains abstract, the collective silence has become a means of negotiating the obfuscation of history as it occurs in the here and now.

SAM SHALABI

## ON HASHISH

AUENS AUENS CD

**BY MATT FIFTYCHE**  
Sam Shalabi is a fulcrum of Montreal Improv and founder member or satellite of various freeform jazz combinations, including Shalabi Effect, Detention and Molasses. On Hashish finds him in more restrained mode, a moment after

*Shalala* in Mainstream Media – a concept drawn of sorts, though one informed by recollections of himself and fellow Montreal residents including Shalala. Effect basqué. Alexandre St-Georges, and Weilseiss's Texier Amari, Nelly Johnson and Kate Lawrence. The title reference is to his自豪of choice, but a set of experiments into altered perception made by the German cultural theorist Walter Benjamin in the late 20s and 30s. Shalala's three-paged composition is dedicated to him. This is not the Benjamin concerned with history, place and memory, the preceding angle of *Entzückende Neuzeit*, a recent soundtrack Berlin Babylon. But the one who wrote various brief protocols on technology, speed and resonance, unpublished in his lifetime but gathered together under the title *Handbuch für die Reichen* in the 1970s. In these writings, Benjamin gives running commentaries on the media he uses, sometimes in resolution 16. In other words, he is writing about the media he uses.

feeling images and auditory effects – spoken words are translated into “coloured, metallic shapes that coalesce into patterns.” Possibly Stetali intends some correspondence between Beethoven’s psychodelic oriental aura and his own exploration of hypnotic ambiances and swirling, instant but certesless expressive motifs. The line of pieces is dominated by the first – a 27-minute odyssey of loosely interconnected trace states called “Outside Chance (Dreamlings).” Bowed lines and a free-beating organ generate a low groundswell of resonance while metallic percussive patterns layer on a ten-part road and a piano periodically trots around a few high end notes, foraging for a melodic opening which never quite forms that world music megamix recognizable as a chorus of woodwind whistles that Juhana and proffers along with them, high-pitched electronic sounds – messages outshining through the borders of perception. A delicate brittle ensemble is punctuated by voices in conversation, filtered into barks and creaks of malfunction. From there the emulsion widens into a stately panorama of obscure and half-submerged gestures: rag-like shuffles, pops and low end rumblings in the piano, always thinning the aura with the ton-homogenous “Scot” books the spell with a five minute curtain square of brass, songs and noodling instrumental spaghetti on the electric guitar, somewhere between Tibetan escaen and a metropolitan rise of string “The Wherewhales” loses the tension with faint smile rings of piano tone glowing through static and the numbing undertone of a drone.

MATTHEW SHIPP

NU BOP

THIRTY EASY THINGIES CD

BY BEN WATSON

Faust Matthe Shipp has pursued an exemplary path in contemporary jazz, refusing to be trapped in a style, yet making his refusal so patently clear that his personality comes over clearly. Shepp has declared that he "intel influence" was Ahmad Jamal, whose spacious, bluesy modal piano was admired by Miles Davis (and was the secret behind the chill yet funky sound of *Kind Of Blue*). Joni also influenced Herbie, Jimi, Zawinul and Ramsey Lewis, so it's no surprise that on this record Shepp brings big, chunky chords to infectious grooves. What is surprising is how far his turn towards DJ culture is unchanged and unbroken.

Wilkens' use of the plucked bass as a well-lessoned drum provides the backbone of the rhythm, to which FLAM adds pulsing syncopated beats and Guillermo E. Brown's turbulent Maré Gas drums. FAMILIA samples (splicing), while organic sequencers play the field wet and Don Carter plays soprano and flute. The five guys are working together on a new groove—he's an amazing moment of studio band where the musicians jive about needing to get their "backs to go dead" to play the jagged rhythmic Scale request—and so there isn't much space for Carter to play the expressive Melodic lines he's celebrated for. He bows the Melodic Didgeridoo style over the beat on "No Bop," and on "X-Ray" he plays some snappy fills underpinned by Wilkens' mighty plucked bass. Biased by Sapp's cutting precision, she directs the effort of the ensemble.

# Size Matters

## 3", 7", 10" and other misshapes

Although it has been said that Art Zoyd were largely responsible for *Ah Can's* Soitz's original impetus, with Ecce Homo's *Diablesserie* (Nang Galene GG30 7") many listeners may feel that they are now producing something more like a dancey version of Daigou's symphonic works than some didactical shit or what?

**Black Dice and Eras Errata** split single (united #5/6 The Snake/ French Canada (Tourist)en Unfinished TM0080 7") is the sound of young America, unleashed and engaged in a battle royale of sexual stereotypes. Black Dice (the guys) reduce the fever of their approach potential into a series of doughty, sausagely lumps that they pour out of an old wheelbarrow. In light of their perceived aggression, it's a cool move on their part. Eras Errata (the girls) puff their magick cheeks and emit a thin stream of choppy tobacco juice that langes ahead like the best memorables of punk rock, but without its dousing melodic touches. It's almost alone, I swear.

Kinds hard to figure out what **Dittel & Tuttie** and **Illusion Of Safety**'s *In Der Wüste Iz Der Sand* (BfB/Inst (De Staat) 0339 7") is. It seems to be the bonus third 7" that also included Almrus Fretches and Thomas Nörber. But that's just a guess. Ask the band! Anyway, the side by Dittel & Tuttie is mostly spoken, with a minor electronic backdrop. It's unclear exactly what's going on, but there's little doubt this would make a dandy "Alice mode" section for The Velvets' "The Gut" an some future medage. The side by Illusion Of Safety (Dan Burles' long, running, multi-faceted experimental jiggernaut) features a guitar solo piano track that gets thrown into a dusty tole full of ringing letters. "Just the place," you'll say when you hear it.

**Street Lance Ledbetter's Organ Race Part 1 & 2** (Edition XIV ND NUMBER 7") is the sound of five electric chord organs, plugged in and left to bloats of their own volition while the microphones gawkily suck up the evidence. The two parts here are remarkably different, in their own ways, reminding one alternately of a cave full of mouth-breathers and the whoosh of a giant alienic thundie totting slowly in deep space.

**Miroslaw Rajkowskis** *The Primary Principle* (Beta-Luxton Ring TOKING025/LACTUM AGEDS 10") is nearly an hour of sweet vocalism by this Polish lung-pumper, ranging from twain-style throat-splintering to something that is almost like young, ring-modulated Varius to guitars chunks that blast straight out of the sound poetry gutter. As near as the notes and tones let on, this is a solo recording, possibly electronically messed with, but unnumbered by extraneous instrumentation. Still, Rajkowskis covers white quadrants of the map with his wobbly neck contort, and you'll find yourself groaning along with him if you aren't careful.

Obviously, any group that names itself after a goddamn Felt song is gonna be somewhat lightweight, but **Testile Ranch**'s *The Dream Of The Murderer's Ship Pulling Day/The Only Mountain Without Snow* (Audiogram ND NUMBER 7"), the second single, I think, by this duo, is very pleasing. The mix of French female vocals and oddly assembled clutter-pop action calls to mind several contemporary units of various degrees of goodness, but Testile Ranch don't actually sound like any of them. There's an incessant sonic edge to their composition that gives them a big advantage over the competition. It was hard to explain what made those first few Go Betweens songs so wendy special. They just were. And so's this.

There is something unhealthy appealing about the idea of a cross between Sprakka's lapdance psychewax, Cal's ass-kissing melancholia and Julian Cope's loopy-assed Nazi synthopia; that their divergent stems meet inside the hock of a guy named

**Thighpussandine** doesn't make admitting to enjoyment of *The Michel Publicity Window* (Ekoton ESKATON27 7") any easier, but there's no point in lying about it. Although this stuff is deadly when heard at album length, it is really kind of nest when observed in short bursts. Just like whale sperm. Probably.

**Total Shatdowns** are part of the new breed of young groups informed by the constant flare of no wave. On their apt single with **Boekenter Poems For Rap/Gay/Oven/Swim Flu/Hot (Thin The Head)** ZUM013 7"), they combine this perceptive ough with a brand of destructive power

nearly worthy of The Germs or early Bad Brains. It's really a pretty ripe combination. Boekenter have more apparent allegiance to the merrimentism of punk thought, but they also sound as unhinged as any other preaching young American. And these days that's a statement of decency.

When the Austrian electronics boys of **Wipeout** play it poppy as on *We Don't Even Pay For This* (Flieg Galene GG40 7"), the sonics are smooth enough to make your skin crawl. When they add a bit of snarl, however, it is possible to enjoy their croak without feeling as though you should be dressed like a sailor, ready to be spanked. Where exactly this fits in the Flukhead universe is beyond my ken, but the singer's poem here growl with an otherness of purpose that is quite magnificent.

These Californian guerrillas of electrosa, **Ultra-ed**, are lub thumping open on *La Economia Nueva* (Operacion Gatekeeper) (Fat Cat FATS04 3"), a collage of tape recordings made along the US/Mexico border at the San Ysidro Port of Entry during protests against Operacion Gatekeeper, the American policy of escalating the military presence across the border. With subdued chanks, "Iba la raza" struggling to be heard above shards of electronic splinters that sound like the links of a chain uncoupling, this could almost be a mere asset, Latino vision of Musikkrafts, except that when he armed all is subdue brawlingly by decreasingly allowing pleasure into his matrix, Ultra-ed are preceding to the convened.

**Ian Hellmell's Rarities 4 EP** (Lefla Records LEPFAD02 7") collects four of the soundtracks that the Brighton based film maker and musician has created for his abstract animations and found public information movies. Collected from ancient radios and customized circuits, the perfectly evokes the images of under-protective scientists purposefully fusing atoms in a Soviet power plant. Perhaps inevitably for such mutant radioactive fallout music, it sounds great at both 33 and 45.

**Maestros** are Taiwanese New Yorker James Fei and former Londoner David Neek, who have both played reeds with Anthony Braxton. Saxophones and bassoon feature on the second

disc of *Precision Electro-Acoustics* (Organised Sound 2 ZK3" CD), but the character of this disc is established through their dedication to low-grade electronics. I'm stoked with Alvin Lucier, Novak has performed with Olafur Arnalds, so an interest in the microstructure of sound is no surprise. It's pursued with assistance from toys and a telephone amplifier, disc pickup attached to the threats of the churning marionettes, and a cassette four track mixer generating feedback loops. The compressed 3" format, here presented as a neat gatefold sleeve, sets them gratis against musicality. Theirs is a Coggin spirit in their creative misuse of technology, complete with a sense of humour: those feedback loops are initially put in the service of a human beatbox, a reed organ added completes the backdrop to the Maestros singing like Suicide waitresses.

49 years old **Klaus Beyer** was doing just fine in his lime job as a Berlin based baker when Baker once the desire to share his love of The Beatles with his Mutt caused him to translate their lyrics into German. His outside sacrifice was inevitable. The publication of his agile translations is undermined by his rather less graceful karaoke style performances over backtracking tapes. Hauptmann Peters Enzheim Hemmvisc (Staatskap STMC012 3" CD) unveils the 60s's breaking take of "Sgt Pepper's." "Gestern" reclaims "Yesterday" for Schubert. "Das Gebe Und Verweserbot" sounds like a well night out in East Berlin circa 1978. An isolated live recording of Beyer's strained outsider negotiation of notes and melody on "Wenn Ich 70 Bin" ("When I'm 64") leaves the comropelite sophisticate in his audience whooping in delight.

The month's cutest misshape award goes to US-based Japanese Improv percussionist **Tatsuya Nakata**, whose *Bowed Metal Orchestra* (TatsuyaNakata.net 2" CD) is pressed inside an outsized transparent credit card with rounded edges. Performed on bowed gong and bells, the five minute piece is a sick, resonating meld of metal tones, all of them imbued with the melancholy awareness of their inevitable decay into nothingness. Know the feeling? □ Reviewed by Byron Coley, Julian Cowley, Bibio Ropf and Peter Shapiro

The sixth Beatle: Klaus Beyer





# The Compiler

New compilations: reviewed, rated, reviled

Zon Juddin's guys, E-P, Cannibal Ox's Vandal Megash and Vasti Avia

In a scene populated by stunted obsessives who would forego their families or bestowals if need just so they wouldn't miss that 20 times in a lifetime chance to find an unknown.

German pressing of The Downliners Seeds' first "I" or the Dorothy Ashby joint that DJ Phat Six loathed in there aren't many more modest collectors that you could call good guys." On the evidence of *The Funky 16 Canners* (Stones Throw STH2008 CD), however, funk isn't Eggn Alapatt proves himself to be more interested in the people who actually made the music than in his own precious bottom line. There have been literally thousands of dodgy old bootlegs over the years, most of them pressed on shiny recycled vinyl with barely any art or label info — not just to guard against any possible legal action out to keep the growing legions of collectors in the dark. For *The Funky 16 Canners*, not only has Alapatt actually bothered to license the tracks, he has also managed to track down the people involved, interview them and present their stories for the first time. Such maverick scholarship and entrepreneurship would deserve praise regardless of the quality of the music. The *Funky 16 Canners* is not only right on ethically, but on the discography as well, which, let's face it, is where the real profit of a funk comp lies. A mix of the fatty common (Eme & The "Top Notes" eternal New Orleans groove, "Dad Walk," Bad Medicine's stock of web-savvy dynamite, "Respasser") and downright hen's teeth (The Highjinxes Band's fabulously messy update of Archie Bell & The Drifters and White & The Magnificents on the site track, Co Reel Artists doing a conga line while delivering a public service announcement on "What About You (In The World Today)"). The *Funky 16 Canners* prizes newness and quirk over chips and skill, but Alapatt's curatorial skill is as good as his, detective work and this is one of the finest examples of the genre, regardless of prevalence.

Perhaps not as esoteric as last year's calling card *Definitive Jux Presents It!* (Definitive Jux PR010 CD) is nevertheless a farce examination of the "impossible between chaos and celebration", as Rob Sonic would have it. Drawing in grime and suffocated by smokebombs, these aesthetics of urban dystopia might seem as though they're wallowing in it, but as these so-freaked would undoubtedly tell you, "that which does not kill you only makes you stronger", and their devotion to the art, their discipline, their ability to find beauty, humour and redemption in the most grotesque is truly inspiring. Cannibal Ox's crew, The Atomic Family, manage to bring battle rhyming back to

its roots in the schoolyard and a game of tag: "Now we track like Sonny & Cher and I'm Al-Ah, Al-Ola Queenie" "The beat on Nasir Ali's "Paper Macé" is absolutely sick. (dismantling sub-bass, corrugated stabs of static, horns, others poised to attack) even if a plain bagel isn't the greatest metaphor for party even concerned Aesop Rock, Mr Luf & Open and The Weathermen all turn in solid to great efforts, but it's the boss's "Stepfather Factory" that will blow the most minds. As he did on Company Flow's stunning "Last Good Sleep," E-P unleashes a torrent of inventiveness at the sambung, who used to beat his mother, except this time it's from the point of view of a corporate shell selling robust surrogates. The queasiest moment comes at the very end with a Spooky And Sordi innos, "Why are you making me hurt you, I love you" over a snippet of Breton shanty.

E Annie Proulx's popular novel, *Accordion Crimes*, weaves fiction around the relentless spread of the accordion across the US. In fact, the accordion's triumphal march was across the whole globe, and by the end of the 19th century this was the revolutionary instrument best expressing the hurly-burly of the new metropolis. *Real Accordion: Early Recordings* (Wiegard SM1623 CD) is an outstanding and rigorous selection of early 78 recordings, which accompanies Christoph Wagner's new book on the accordion's historical place in popular music. Sadly the book is in German, but Steeveson here are in English. The details of these playing styles, the floribund, stomp and abutment of these performances, are glimpses into a vanished world. From Leadbelly's "Cane Bread Rough" to a South African concern, from the original big ensemble line-up of French bagpipe and accordian to a delicate Austin dance that with hammered dulcimer, great miasmatics is as played throughout.

The squeakbox may have had the world in its dutches, but it was nothing compared to the relentless march of rock 'n' roll. Even the world's oldest, most complex musical tradition was defenceless in its wake. *Saint Seurin 70/71* (Nerma/Stashas Music COE 20CD) is an apparent reissue of two albums that collected the best tracks played at a silent contest sponsored by India's largest cigarette company. The world may be drawing in late night compilations, but this one is genuinely strong enough to merit more than a passing glance. Western garage groups may have swiped the spirit of the rage to bend some more into karmen in Wolvehampton or Preston, but in Ahmedabad the rage might as well have been Bing Crosby. Instead, the Indian groups collected have used transcendental silliness to mess with people's

heads. The X-Lent's "Psychedelia" begins like "Secret Agent Man" only to quickly collapse in a heap of Dick Dale gypsy taffeta and what may be the worst baseline in the history of recorded music. Inverts bring the zippy savor fare of the Bollywood precursors to "Zorba's Dance" which is, as you guessed, the Greek wedding once done a guitar with the drummer smashing plates for the beat. The cheerful ineptitude can sometimes be grating (*Genuine Spores*, *The Dresars*, even Africa 70 would have walked out immediately if Fela had played the keyboard lines on *The Confusions' "Voice From The Inner Soul"*), but mostly this is enchantingly hot and just net stale collector lodestar, especially on what is certainly the most remarkable cover of CCR's "Born On The Bayou" ever recorded.

The leery tones of Santa Beat were the result of musicians who didn't know any better, but the mistakes, mishaps, pitfalls and protcols of *Medical Mistakes* (Hot Air ARMED003 CD) are entirely intentional. Matt Weller's Hot Air label has for years been dedicated to the proposition that "the powers that be made the samples, the powers that be sold us the samples, the powers that be will have to live with the consequences". On the evidence of the back catalogue snippets collected on *Medical Mistakes*, there'll be hell to pay. James Brown having a fit of the hiccups, and refua, Nene Cougar with incontinence, Meadowlark's bawdy music, the electronic tones of a hungry Styracosaurus, romper nazi drum 'n' bass are among the inputs to this Frankenstein's monster with the mind of Carl Stalling, the vocal chords of Horn Chapman and the body of Sonny Hung.

For *OHMIX* (OHM Editions/Avatar) OHMWFYR022 CD) the Quebec-based Avatar foundation invited eight composers to plunder the back catalogue of its OHM Editions imprint and produce new work through their remixes and transformations. German recyclist Ralf Heidkötter, of PLE 04, kicks off with a steadily building shimmer that peaks in a flurry of samples followed by a gentle pulsing decay. Montreal sunstabilist Martin Tétreault's brief contribution collapses multiple sources into a jittery flue, music and voice sped up and whined into an agitated state. French composer Christian Caloz produces a tense, dysphonic piece in which an impoverished and seemingly distressed human sound is hemmed in by shadowy electroacoustic forms. Terre Insonore contributes "Transitional edit!", a cackling glockch of synthetic horn sounds, a angry and terminally irritable jam. There are two pieces from arch plunderer John Oswald "Oimpone" (reconstructs a radio phone conversation, empty words drifting amongst rhythmic sounds in a communication vacuum

"Ridge" builds from apples to waves to a bicoastal of lush piano music. Speaker piano rambles through an animated prece by Diane Labrosse, who has played with the groups Wanda Brass and Justice. Trinkling bells, organ chords and ready blasts, cartoon squeaks and distorted human voices are among the other elements in this soundtrack to some enigmatic narrative. Ambitious technician David Krasan spouts an engrave of another kind. His "Chimte" gradually intensifies from preprint to full glaze without ever revealing the source of its luminous thimb Finch. Alessandro St. Orla, an improving associate of Kristian, draws the retinaling ar from the OHMIX atmosphere, mimicking the micro rhythms of a puncture or a gas cylinder with an open valve. A long, measured breath out. The OHM policy of taking risks often results in albums that include arresting episodes yet are uneven overall. A more selective project, OHMIX is consistently worthwhile.

Like the silent pages of the catalogue for a non-existent exhibition, the OHM editions consisting *Artist Board: A Guide By Instinct* (Instruct INSS0550 4XCD) come elegantly bound together in sheets of plastic epistles. Selected and sequenced by Taylor Deupree, who's responsible for putting the whole package together, snatching the transition of one track to the next with the insertion of additional sounds, this collection covers a great deal of material. Part Deupree collaborators Tetsu Iseya and Sawao Yatsu are well represented, together with Moby, whose "Mojuba" opens this disc three, Terre Insonore, with "Two AM On A Side", Sub Dub, Deep Space Network, Future and Escape Team. Although elegantly designed, the track listing for each disc is a littleudging with information at times, making for an extremely beautiful, if not particularly informative, listening experience.

Berlin's 90% Wissar label cuts through the static with *90% Wissar* (W002 CD), containing collaborative explorations of how electric voices interact with each other in the electroacoustic universe that exist at music's outer edge. Information exchanges take place here with a minimum guarantee of truth, the absolute and relative having already imploded together in the black hole of meaning. Column One offer up two new tracks before stamping into Rephenonium on the relentless "Art To Dance", Andrew Lippman plagues Jürgen Blögl into the electronic Wright of "Fragment" and Berlin-based electronic composer Freder Batszmann brings Genesis P. Orridge under his own words on "Kites Of Death". You may need to pay some attention to what's happening there, before it gets too late... Reviewed by Clive Bell, Julian Cowley, Ron Hollings and Peter Shapley



# The Boomerang

## Recent reissues: rated on the rebound

Burned in New York in 1972 by saxophonist Byron Morris (who had studied with Ornette Coleman and Roland Kirk) and trumpeter Vincent McEwan, *Unity* was an idealistic musical collective inspired by the self-determining politics of the Black Nationalist movement, the transcendental jazz of John Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders, and the sophisticated street funk of Curtis Mayfield. Their sextet recording *Blow Thru Your Mind* (Universal Sound US17 CD) was initially released in May 1974 on their own label, which was distributed by hand. Long a jazz dance classic, it's worth hearing primarily for the opening "Kitty Bay," written by Gerald Wiese, the third Unity co-founder. It's a 12 minute piece driven by crisp percussions and the swinging bass of Milton Suggs (formerly of Sun Ra's Arkestra), the rhythmic track loaded down with funk horns, Latin-tinged piano and dazzling vocal acrobatics from Jay Clayton, who later joined The Steve Reich Ensemble. There are three other tracks, nice enough but unexceptional, with the period lyrics hinting Clayton at.

Gavel JACKMAN, formerly of the Scratch Orchestra and the animating spirit of Orgasmum, has had a long-standing collaboration with mysterious newcomers the New Blockaders. *Orgasmum & The New Blockaders* issued a very limited edition single named "Pulp" back in 1984 on Aeronautics Records, and *Pulp (Robot RR26 CD)* is an extended return to that piece. Straight out of some febrile Edgar Allan Poe vision of enforced enclosure, 12 three-minute blocks burn impressively from the same raw materials: an overwhelming sense of being hammed in, with those tantalizing brief pauses between blocks reinforcing the sense of oppressive weight once the sounds return. In each manifestation of the space frantic activity is incessant, still the music has a momentary quality its peculiar power seems centred in a serene state that hovers, like an unearthly glow, amid the jagged shards of raw noise and

the charming, pulverized acoustic rubble. That combination of serenity and metallic chaos lifts *Pulp* beyond the range of rise-of-the-mill industrial onslaught. Each variation shifts the emphasis in some way, raising the interface as the ceiling descends and the walls close in. Its effect is cumulative, involving both claustrophobia and a sense of exhilaration as its concentrated energy is recycled.

Courtesy of Italy's Dogone label come three fine examples of soundtrack records for guida, a type of movie thriller that owes its name to the Italian word for 'yellow,' designating the colour traditionally associated with mystery novels. Haunted by psychopaths, criminal lawfies prone to twisted acts of irrational violence, guida require highly stylized musical accompaniment. **Eduardo Martínez's** score for *Il Diavolo Per Cervello* (Dogone Red 135 CD) has an eerie serenity about its melancholy setting of lone female voice against soaring strings. By contrast, his sparse, unsettling arrangements for voice, guitar and percussion for *Giornata Nera Per l'Aereo* (Dogone Red 136 CD) suggest a mind strung into madness. The most hot, however, is to be found in **Armando Solasola's** music for *Misteri psychici* (Dogone Red 134 CD), a blending of nightclub swing and lounge themes that suggests the movie's principal characters are having far too much fun dancing and chortling to do any serious damage to each other.

Dogone is a part of the Italian Abrissas organization, which, apart from shoring up the market in reissues of obscure Italian movie scores, is doing the same thing for vinyl reissues of records originally issued during the halcyon years (mid-60s-early 70s) of African-American free jazz by the ESP and BIG labels. The story of how first ESP in New York and then BIG in Paris became the major labels for free jazz has been told often enough in these pages, and Get Back's most recent batches of releases rescue some real stone cold killer parties from both

label's back catalogues. In particular, from the ESP vaults comes **Marnette Watts's** 1966 *Marquette And Company*, (Abaxxes/ESP-Disk 1044 CD/LP) which is almost prototypical in the way it brings together an ad hoc group to blow through raggedy ensemble parts that serve as open-ended frameworks for some wild, woolly solos from saxophonists Watts and Björn Lancaster, vibes player Karl Berger, and guitarist **Stanley Sharrock**. No one was playing guitar like Sharrock in 1965. His solo on "Backdrop For Urban Revolution" is a lethal extraneous mesh drawn from multiple note pile-ups and distorted chicken scratch rhythm lines, a combination of free jazz intensity and R&B gnarly which also animated his 1970 BIG solo album *monkey-pookey-bo* (BIG Back/BIG Acute GET337 LP), recorded in Paris in June of that year as part of BIG's epochal Actuel series with a group that included vocalist wife Linda in the front line. In a neat bit of synchronicity, the American label *Four Men With Beards* (cute) has issued a vinyl edition of Sharrock's other legendary and equally rare solo record of the period, 1968's *Black Woman* (4M103 LP), which again paired his fire-eating guitar with Linda's bassline and incendiary vocal lines, this time in a New York jazz quartet that also included pianist Dave Burrell and drummer Meliod Grimes.

It will have been a long time since anyone has seen stretchsealed vinyl copies of *monkey-pookey-bo* or *Black Woman* in the racks. The same goes for **Spontaneous Music Ensemble's** Birds Of A Feather, yet another Abrissas/Get Back reissue (GET450 LP), this time from the early days of European improvised music. Recorded at Hervéville on 27 July 1971, the record features a small, free strong-edged SIME, with the two founding members — John Stevens on drums and Trevor Watts on soprano saxophone — joined by Ron Hemmings on bass and Jaki Tippett on guitar and vocals. The pacing of "One, Two, Albat" is magisterial, Hemmings' bass sounding

deliciously raw and undefended. Stevens somehow both atmospheric and creepy Watts was handed the interesting role of imitating Ayler to accentuate his lines, Tippett joins him with a woofy vocal, mimicking his sound with extraordinary skill. On the title track Watts gets back his singular voice, suppling some twitting interplay with Hemmings's bass. Side two comes on with the b-side track. The brief pause to flip the record brings home how special the music is; it appears to slow down to a continuous instant. Although her strained acoustic guitar is poignant, Julie Tippett's singing was not invariably successful. Here, though, her vocality integrates well with Hemmings's continual agitation on bass, and the dialogue between her hoarse screams and Watts's soprano becomes a counterpoint to the drift of the rhythm section. SIME's *Plus Equals* (1974-1975) Directed By John Stevens (Emprise 4062 CD) features two London recordings from 1974 and 1975: 20 minutes of a 21 piece Spontaneous Music Ensemble at the Little Theatre Club, and 40 minutes of a ten piece at St John's Smith Square. By this stage, Stevens had moved further into his concept of orchestral collectivity. With this number of improvisors, the only way to avoid a racket was to resort to a held chord. Adding the extra 11 musicians thickens the texture, but the music is cut from the same cloth. The improvisation square and square, but the harmonic status is all-consuming. It does not really matter that some were highly individual players, because everything is subsumed in Stevens's concept of a gradually peaking and then slowly ebbing moment of "sounding." After a while, in SIME music, myth and yearning overpower intellect. The continuous piping of the sibyllines (one Stevens workshop instruction was "play high") and the general scribble begin to sound like a solemn caricature of collective hope, the strain of waiting for some transcendent occurrence that never arrives. □ Reviewed by Alan Cowley, Ken Hollings and Ben Watson

El maestro: Ennio Morricone





# Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

## AARDVARCK

NOZUM

DELISH 320SHAKA 12"

Across releases for Rush Hour, Music For Speakers and Dapt Up-Bots, Mike Kuits has contributed to the ongoing dialogue between Detroit and the Netherlands. His third release for Delish (and a preview of his upcoming album for the label), Nozum presents three tracks of his signature machine funk. Disparant chords hang uneasily like leaden, low clouds rent by insatiable snarls, hammering and effluvia. His steely textures and mid-tempo talk recall Urban Tuba, especially in his snapshot interludes, cinematic reductions that compress a mood into a few repeating bars. The untitled track is the standout, with a pensive chord progression and desecrated snare that both sound borrowed from Rigo's debut, Africa Blanca. Tony Awochewu lends the track a springy bounce in his reverb, punctuating it with brighter tones and a brassy bass squelch, but there's really no improving on the suity indifference of the original.

## DABRYE

ONE/THREE

GHOSLY INTERNATIONAL G13 CD

The vein of glitch has been feeling a bit tapped out lately — the lo-fi's proved so plentiful that it's depressed the value of the gilded grit that increasing numbers of bit-miners bring to market. But damned if Dabrye, aka Ann Arbor's Todd Mullins, hasn't turned up a wheelbarrow full of angle, snappy nuggets. At first listen, his fuzzy desktop downerwill will impress comparisons with Mille Plateau's recent Click-Ahop compilation, but it draws on more varied sources to come up with an album that owes as much to Modestep as Dodi. "The Lush" wants to be two-step but doesn't know it (and its sashaying sash is a wonderful anachronism amidst the sandblasted digital). "Tuffie No Shuffle" joins a set of vibes into liquid light, while "I'm Missing You" goes for a free Pomeroy-style drunken disco wash, a schizo chorus of sped-up voices and frantic biffing about. Beneath every track lie goony eyeballs played on a nibber Moog. Best of all, Dabrye's punched digital rhythms so sound somehow handmade, fraught with glitches and unapologetically lazy when it comes to timekeeping.

## DOMU

UP + DOWN

ARCHIVEFILE002 CD/DLP

2001 was the year that West London's broken beat massive stretched out into full length territory, with Nubian Mindz, New Sector Movements, Alannah, Numbers and Selji's Homeoskop all dropping album efforts. But the debut long player from Danu (Dante Stanton) is the best of the bunch, railing the merger of nujazz and Technot soul without a shred of excess or pretense. Every track's a keeper, marked by minimalist textures, innovative drum programming and an honest-to-goodness sense of melody — most impressive in a genre that sometimes satisfies itself with fuzzy noodling. Stanton's predilection for the

expansive chords of Ian O'Brien (who contributes to a track here) keeps the sound cohesive, but little surprises turn up everywhere, offsetting the easy flow with moments of inspired whimsy. "Gotta Set It" mixes grimey and dryly digital hip-hop beats with glowing Moog atmospheres and skiffle scratching, while "Body Electric" adds a be-bop saxophone line to a synopated break and Demu's characteristic sunburst chugs. The vocal toccos don't disappoint either. Valerie Etienne offers a smoky invocation to "Sun Away With Me," while newcomer D'Vox lends his distinctive shoulder to "Repercussions."

## DOOGYMOTO

DAKEWA

SONDBURG NO NUMBER 12"

Matthew Herbert's Soundburb label continues to release some of the most unorthodox House music but there, B Doogymoto is a bro from Berlin and Hamburg who combine beatbox, synthesizers and live guitar. The most distinctive element of their lay, understated music, though, is singer Fumi Edo's lyrics, sung in a hybrid tongue of German, English and Japanese. The line, "I ain't always barbecue," from the skanking, Sitis-style "Dekida," sounds relativity straightforward next to the tangle-to-tangle tangle of "Dakewa." But the Trinity with which Edos sings between the three mimics the raw flow of the band's lo-fi glide, as a genre House rhythm uses a cool organ and snatty bassline down the aisle toward a strange and touching nuptial.

## FLYTRONIX

ELEVATOR

SOLARIA SOLA0819"

For him the Ambient Jungle of their Moving Shadow days, Flytronix these days are forging fiery fusion with Latin American percussion and slab-bass funk. "Eleven," like their single "Heavy Hail," is based around a bright, repeating Rhodes line and clattering drums; here they return from the full-blown breakout and keep their listener earnings intact restrained. "Shades Of Jade" takes a more plodded keyboard melody and sets it against increasingly furious drum programming, with picketed bass underpinning it all like an aggro Javanese, the style begs the question of where jazz ends and becomes pure effect — or affect? — but that question doesn't prevent these tracks from being grossly if mildly cheeky investigations in rhythm and texture.

## FOG

PNEUMONIA

NINJA TUNE ZEN1050 CD12"

The title track sounds much more like it's on some Neil Young shirt than anything you'd expect from Ninja Tune's albatross updated with a dying Moog and a bit of scratching (including a debly scissored solo on a kazoo-sounding "kind of Korean folk instrument") beneath the thumped guitar and unashed wobbling Colours' "Uggh Duck Ma" stays true to the track's basement bawdy but adds a judicious splash of strings. On "Moon Repellant," Aesop's Dese Nine

supplies the nasal lyrics to a dulled out morass of overdriven drums and gently twanged guitar.

## JOAKIM

COTTON GUN

VERBALITE NO NUMBER 12"

Joakim Beavers' last album for the French leftfield House imprint, 1999's Tiger Suds (released under the name Joakim Lone Dot), was a much more overtly jazz-influenced affair than the vein of As Drei's Planetary Folklore. But "Cotton Gun," despite the live-sounding drum break, boasts newly sharpened electro edges (gated handclaps, staccato laser synths) and the rounded melodic sensibility of classic Black Dog productions. Kirk Degregia's mix is a departure from his own jazz style, employing a punchy arpeggio and so little swing that even Tance fans might view it as S&H, even though it could probably fill an ibiza floor, it slots toward West London by virtue of its internal syncopations and supple funk.

## JAMMIN'

KINDA FUNKY

BINGO BEATS BINGO 004 12"

On paper, a Wokee remix of DJ Zinc sounds somehow off, what could two-step's fleet-footed "Borde" veteran possibly extract from Zinc's putatively leaden breakfast borscht? Amazingly, though, Wokee's spin on "Kinda Funky" works perfectly, thinning out the beat and dropping a nicely break every four bars. The spring bassline's pure Wokee, all cowed energy and Moog cushion. The repeated vocal sample, "Whoa get down/And do it kinda funky," could have been a total dancefloor throwaway but something in the resonance of the woman's voice — the "zip all right" hoaseless, the weird pre-addictive squeak — makes it perfect fit for the track's grimy textures. Zinc's own "Unstable," affecting his trademark pummeling breakdowns with lithing twists, is absolutely true to its title, and further proof of why Zinc owns the papers on the subgenre called breakstep.

## MANITOBA

GIVER

LEAF DOOK29 CD12"

Transcend to London transplant Dan Snash has a revisionist, take-on-two-step much like the drill 'n' bassists' approach to Jungle before him, reworking the mix with an experimentalist's touch and an "intelligent palette." Only in this case, he needs the irony for sonate gentility ("Wisees" reconstructs a two-step glide in a gatinha curtain of spoons, bottles and bells. No bong-bong boozing, just the purgle of loose change converted into a currency of sonic commerce). "Dundas, Ontario" salutes the industrial subub with a throbber, micro-programmed assemblage of break, churning chords and passed vocals. For all the bulk and the mass, Snash manages to keep it pretty and lithe. "Fit And Ass The Great Canadian Weekend" attempts a similar mix of industrial pastoralism, this time with "live" drums and a whorl of Amernet chords worthy of Aphex Twin.

## MURCOF

MONOTONO

CONTEXT FREE MEDIA TEXT006 12"

Fernando Coimbra's debut as Murcof blends chamber music with Techno structures. But instead of penning his own string arrangements, Norton member Coimbra calls his samples from mid-20th century minimalism. At times the source is barely recognizable. "Mihely" sneaks a lone tympani and two plucked violin notes into a symmetrical wave of sine tones, and arpeggios and fizzy percusion "Merengue," on the other hand, relies upon ample segments of piano and plaintive violin. Set against a faint electric beatbox and sizzily percussive acoustic instruments, create a delicate textual terrain. Most importantly, Coimbra has the ear to pick out elements that don't overwhelm his fragile rhythmic structures. On "Gasse," these elements — snugly stroked violins, a jaggeded blips and a heavenly female voice — trace the dimensions of a sacred space fit for the 21st century, where Dawn Upshaw leads the choir and the organist is running Super\_Collider.

## S & Z

DEF MOVEZ EP

SHESSTEPPER SHESPEELER 12"

**JULIAS & HYPA HYPA**  
FEATURING MC JUICEEMAN/  
HMP FEATURING  
MC MARSHALL

CONGO FEVER

SHESHELFER 12"

Zed Bias — aka Madafunkin, Phutonium, ES Dubs and others — seems to have invented an entire subgenre of UK Garage. Practically as one else has managed a sound so blunt or tough. His jangs thump or the nudge with daff, truncated beats before exploding in dark bursts of colour. Likewise, his take on two-step swing is unparalleled. His synopsophons' weave chunkily around the One, never on beat, but never quite off either. He's not afraid of a little Bakers-style lassiness, but his rest isn't in the grumble of the bassoon, or better yet, the atonal bump of an abandoned kick drum. For the sixth release on his Shesstepper label, the colly anonymous duo S & Z play with flat, relentless drums, rhythmic bong-bong scratching, and the faint vroomish of synth strings. The kick's in the way they till in the spaces — sicc beat thens, rimshot rolls and raw stab glocks, there's space around every sound, so no matter how dense the track, it always breathes.

On Sheshefle 6, Julias, Zed Bias and crew bring ragge edge and bobs urgency to a label better known for its Spanish production and minimalist quirk. Muylade bass ages beneath crisp rimshots and the occasional outburst of toasting, more of that adiose mistaga that permeates the current breakbeat massasse, who's have thought that a simple refrain like "Congo Fever" could sound like a call to arms? On the flip, "Rolin Touch" is a spacious, soff thriller with brushed, metallic timbres and the brightest snare sound going. And the title is spot on, as it ambles along with an easy syncopated glide.

# Dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

## ALPHA & OMEGA SERIOUS JOKE

A&O AAC0302 CD/LP

For the last couple of years A&O have been busy reining or being remixed. They were at the forefront of the UK's dub scene for a number of years, their sound always unique and instantly recognisable, even in a genre defined by its predilection for dubbing version on version on version ad infinitum. But their very individuality left A&O with a problem – how to move forward? This new watershed set is their attempt to move on. As its title implies, "The Dub Is Out There" is a take on the *X Files* theme, while the title track is Peer Gynt in dub. Resident A&O vocalist Nostika appears alongside such guests as Vibronics and Messian Dread. The greater variety of texture and samples in these new tracks hasn't been bought at the expense of the loping drum patterns and driving bass that are their signature sound.

## ELEPHANT MAN LOG ON

GREENSLEEVES GREL19 CD

The number one DJ in Jamaica last year, by some distance, was Elephant Man – the Energy God, mentored by Bounty Killer and, like Harry Toddler, a former member of the Soca Omens Crew. A follow up to last year's *Crown & Gun*, this set opens with the enormous title track, the psychadelic boy's chat on 2 Headz still burning "Liquid" rhythm, and continues through another 21 tunes produced by the crew of Jamaica's elite Panter attack division of young producers: Baby G, Wee Poo, John Snow, Convo, Fabba, Scotta, Jr., Goofy, CJ etc. The results leave you wondering whether Timbaland and co are tuning in. Guests include Oricle (who on occasion has been known to run in the dance with this particular DJ), Ward 21, Ky-Mani Marley, Buju Banton and Wayne Marshall. The back cover features a photo of Elephant Man in a rage with a white powder smearing his face. Next!

## LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY

JAMAICAN ET  
TROJAN TUD002 CD

## LEE PERRY BEST OF LEE PERRY

SPV SPV005 LP

The sheer irreverability of Lee Perry's post-Ark solo work is beginning to reach Finnegan's Wake proportions. As before, his themes are God and self, death and immortality, power and impotence, all of them exposed in the style of a Daily Star columnist on a terminal acid trip. On this ronky, a genuinely new release for the reborn Trojan label, Scratch adopts a new concept – voicing parallel words in left and right channels. This compares to the results twice as confusing as, if you prefer, twice as long and ten times more tedious. "Redious" is a word the producer once understood and, with Junior Marvin, he employed to great effect in more disciplined days.

Nearly the whole writh of Perry's Jamaican career is reasonably well represented on the vinyl reissue of a solo Best Of set. Unfortunately the 16

tracks are crammed onto a single piece of vinyl. But with "City Ho Hot" and "Bonic Rats", albeit in their shorter versions, plus the truly magical "Soul Fire" as standouts, there's little filler here.

## RAS ALLA & THE SPEARS BOSRAH

STABES ST001 1"

This month's reveal selection is a 1976 Tagger Tupe production with a mix from Tabby's. The classic style of heavyweight roots, with an immediately identifiable Black Acid rhythm churning away at an impossibly languorous pace, gets a full workout on the dub by The Intimidators (soc). Ras Alla, better known as Prince Alla, is one of those singers who rarely cut anything other than a strictly righteous tune here. He's at his impassioned best. Also look out for Alla's "Funest" and Junior Ras & The Spears' "Babyish Fair".

## BIM SHERMAN THE NEED TO LIVE

CENTER 35003 CD/12"

Throughout the history of On-U Sound, the late Bim Sherman reportedly only put two solo albums for the label. Across The Red Sea (1981) and the truly beautiful Miracle (1995). But he collaborated on numerous other On-U projects, releasing various 10" and 12" singles. This collection compiles rare, previously unreleased and alternate versions of some of these productions. "My Little House" is a vocal version of Lee Perry's "SOI" and Taekhead's "We're Walking Right On The Edge", but here with additional vocals by Shara Nelson in a version previously only available on an Italian 12" shared with Dub Syndicate's "Night Train".

"Devious Woman And Man" is a collaboration with Peter Tosh and a rewarding of his earlier, less than PC "Devious Women". The album's title track was recorded in three hours on Ministry's Fairlight and was only briefly available back in 1986 on a compilation called Bugs On The Wve. He recorded acoustic versions of "Use Your Head" ("Institution") and "We Longer, No Longer", along with Bengy I and Skip McDonald. These previously unreleased tracks were the inspiration for the singer's masterpiece, Miracle. What could have been a patchy after-tune out to be a satisfying album, and a fit tribute to the memory of a great but unusual roots vocalist.

## THE ROOTSMAN ROOTS BLOODY ROOTSMAN

METED 003 CD

Daniel "Metes" is a Berlin-based reggaeophile, DJ, producer and label owner. As an artist going out as Bus and Submission he recently added some guitar textures to Polka's R Roots mix set. Here, his Metes label plays host to Bradford's Rootsmen, whose constant jiggling around Europe and support of newer leftfield dub acts is beginning to pay dividends in the quality of his own work. This is a fine collection of rare and unreleased mixes from 1996 onwards, with some remixes thrown in by friends and supporters El Jaihor, Jammer Unit and Robbers Inc. One of the last

strictly roots tunes cut by The Rootsman, 1995's "Souls Of Freedom" (Hammerbeast), possesses a bassline so simple, fluid and melodic, it's positively inspirational.

## VARIOUS BIGGA JUDGEMENT: GREENSLEEVES RHYTHM

ALBUM #19  
GREENSLEEVES GREL19 CD/LP

## VARIOUS NO VACANCY: RIDDIM RIDER

BOOT CAMP/CARIB CRD014 CD

For many music fans, the prospect of listening to a whole album full of different versions of the same rhythm would confirm all the existing prejudices about reggae. Not, perhaps, this is probably the best way to listen to modern reggae. It's certainly the route to a better understanding of rhythm culture. The Greensleeves organisation relentlessly drives the riddim judgement forward with this set from New York's Chris Golding's Clarke, showcasing Old and new with fresh waves of new hotshot DJs competing for star status. Capleton, Bounty Killer and Sizzla are now classed as veterans.

No Vacancy is a 21st century version of an old Sugar Minott/Chanel One classic revitalised by Computer Paul. As a rhythm album, its charm made for a refreshing contrast to some of its more brutal contemporaries. Its more relaxed pace provides the perfect bed for a clutch of vocalists to provide the dominant presence, rather than the more lugubrious DJs. Coca Cola sounds a little more gravelly these days on "Cycle". Sugar Minott revisits his old rhythm in tandem with QL Louis Culture. With Yami Bolo, Morgan Heritage, Tony Rebel, Lady G, Seeter Canto and Glen Washington among other contributors, this set has plenty to recommend it.

## VARIOUS HEAVYWEIGHT RIB TICKLERS

UNPOLU PROMO CD

Manchester's Mr Scruff has been a long-time supporter of the dubwise selection. Perhaps this has been too readily perceived as just another manifestation of his wacky worldview, with obligatory reggae oddities playing an equal part as those bizarre tunes picked up in charity shops across the North West of England. It's therefore pleasing for the Scruffster to dispel such thoughts with this fine selection mixing old and new, wild and wonderful. So Tubby and Ninny share space not only with Henry & Louis, The Truth and Dry & Heavy but some even more oblique expressions of dub art from the likes of Bonz Torsle and El Makai. The kind of mix has been avoided in the past for fear of alienating the conservative dub reggae fan, but the reverent Scruff is aiming for converts.

## VARIOUS THE REVENGE OF KING JAMMY'S SUPER POWER ALLSTARS VOLUME 2

JAHMAN JAHMAN CD

The second volume stands as the best representative of the three double CDs now

available from this French label of the ones and future King's output, mainly from the mid-to-late 80s, when he was still a prince. This set kicks off with five straight versions of the "Sting Ting" rhythm, including Wayne Smith's own epoch-making original. Providing a unique example of chaos theory, this rhythm started life as a Casio demo pattern. Originally modified music soon infected all Kingston's studios, to the dismay of musicians and the delight of the denizens. The CD soon became king and its only now, 15 years later, that singers are coming back to their own right. It's perhaps worth pointing out that, due to the dominance of this "versioned" rhythm, all the a-bums in this series come with the tracks mixed together. Though it's sometimes annoying not to have the album cut absolutely clean, this is nevertheless an underexplored period for reggae, and the 100 or so tracks spread over these three sets are just a fraction of the sides Jammy issued during the period. The attractions of many of these uncomplicated productions, which seem so immediately obvious today, were unjustly ignored outside the Jamaican market when they were originally released. It only goes to prove that we should always pay proper attention to what's happening now, for fear of unjustly overlooking it.

## VARIOUS REGGAE CLASSICS: SERIOUS SELECTIONS VOLUME 1

REVIND SELECTA REVIND LP

The undisputed god of reggae DJs on radio, Kiss FM's Deed Rodigan, compiled a whole series of "definitive" albums charting his beloved genre back in the mid-90s. Unfortunately, the distributor disappeared and so did the albums. Now is batch of them are back and worth snapping up before the supply totally dries up again. Especially recommended are the three volumes covering that most neglected of reggae sub-genres: the UK's homegrown lover's rock. Also look out for sets dedicated to Roots & Culture and Reggae Classics.

## THE WAILERS

HIGHER FIELD MARSHALL/DUB  
PK 6 10"

Mark Arvey, from Honest Jon's Records on London's Portobello Road, has been doing a fine job of late compiling the immaculate Studio One series for Seal jazz, and he also helped out on Blood & Fire's popular *Higher Than Blue* set of soul covers. This new release on his own PK label makes a direct and irrevocable connection between the classic reggae of the 70s and today's reinventions. "Higher Field Marshal" is an Aston Family Man! Barret production, for which he came up with a bass line that's twice the bleep. Barret brothers put together. But the melody of Peter Tosh rules the instrumental verse. His style is much more breathy than Pablo, with a jazzy feel to the playing. The flip side Berlin's Rhyme & Sound loose on the mix, bringing Family Man's bass sound to a different level, so way down it's physical. One of 2001's essential releases. □

# Electronica

Reviewed by Ken Hollings

## ATTENTION INDUSTRIES MEETS PATRICIA ELAINE OAKLEY

PATTERN OF I

HOMMELROCK ULM H116 CD

New Age Easy Listening, for those not given to extremes, this is essentially an intricate series of assured arrangements in search of a purpose. Working from minimalist pieces laid down three years ago for a multimedia CD-ROM, Michael Zimmerman emulates filters, kalimbas and stars with analogue Moogs, electric pianos and gently patterning drum machines to create open-ended compositions to which vocalists Oakley adds a hint of breathy urban poetry. You can probably picture the kind of lounge bar this would play well in.

## CHRIS & COSEY

### THE ESSENTIAL CHRIS & COSEY COLLECTION

CONSPIRACY INTERNATIONAL CCI 101A 2XCD

Former weeklies of civilization Chris Carter and Coe Farn Taff had already etched the template for their daddy exotic disco sound while still in The Flying Saucer on such numbers as "NB74" and "Hot On The Heels Of Love". This selection, lovingly extracted from their considerable recorded output, dating from the 1981 release of their debut album *Heartbeat* through to 1996's *Skimpie Skamble*, demonstrates just how closely they have clung to that original instinctive feel. The mood of ice cold sensuality is ungloriously maintained over two CDs through a blend of dreamily precise technopop and isolated sexual fantasy that is equal parts George Moroder, Martin Denny, ABBA and Jane Birkin.

## CINEPLEX ELECTROCARDIOGRAMA

KROMAR KRS006 001 CD

The raw muscle of human emotion meets the cold circuitry of modern anatomical medicine, courtesy of Argentina's Sebastien Litmanovich, whose songs come packaged with a dismembered red heart on its cover and a sequence of electrical pulses on the accompanying insert cards. Subtitled meditative compositions, delicately spun around an acoustic guitar, are enhanced by a metachloric universe of electronic effects. Slide guitars echo and chime deep into the darkness, while Kong drums in and out of the pulsacular mix. Sounds to accompany the slow death of feelings once firmly entrenched.

## COLUMN ONE ELECTRIC PLEASURE

SONO WASSER W001 CD

Dedicated to the notion that a future that can be recorded has already happened, and as such is inevitably compromised, this panoramic take on the retrospective technology linking man, machine and the alien worlds of artificial perception from Berlin-based interventionists Column One is breathtaking in its thoroughness. Opening with "Nine Limits To The Imagination", a serenely modulated collage of bytes taken from

sci-fi movie soundtracks of the 50s and 60s, *Electric Pleasure* weirds the clear-eyed confidence of that bygone age onto a hefty framework of electro beats and space age bleeps. The drosses robot imagery of the accompanying booklet is matched by the impressive array of synthetic voices and bodyslapping servosounds, especially on "Electric Bones", "Voice Test" and "Receiver". At last, a world made safe for machines.

## DETROIT ELECTRONIC COALITION

### VOLUME TWO

DELECTRONIC T2 CD

Detroit's crumbling, desolate spaces are returned to a twiching semblance of life on this industrial strength compilation reflecting the more Techno/Metal end of the city's musical activities, from the full-on genocope of Evans' "Goliath" to the savage sonic decimation of Mutual Hate Society's "Chaos" and Smitty's "The Mechanization Of God". Hard to pick a standout performance, but Spacescape's "God Help Us", a headlong plunge into the gut-trotting madness surrounding the Columbine High School massacre, certainly commands attention. As do the group's plans to release a Trance version of "Green Tambourine". We can only hope and pray.

## DETROIT ESCALATOR CO BLACK BUILDINGS

PEACE FROG PFG012 CD

A very different kind of music from a whole other city block, Neil Olivera's ambitious *Black Buildings* has been a long time in the making, but well worth the wait. The building Olivera depicts, both in his paintings and across the 20 tracks of this CD, is vast imposing manholes that afford only the briefest glimpse of a world beyond their confines. If any sense of light or perspective manages to keep in, it's only through the encoded spaces revealed on such compositions as "City Lights" and "Point Of Entry". Like Carl Craig's *Landscapes* and Jeff Mills' *Metropolis* soundtracks, *Black Buildings* accurately expresses the notion of the modern city as a constant flow of electronic data: a refined state of energy in relentless pursuit of equilibrium. As such it feels impressively close to the true spirit of Detroit Techno.

## VIKTOR DUPLAIX

DJ KICKS

STUDIO-KT 116 CD

"Get your instructions from God, and then do what God tells you to do," a voice commands on Critico Point's "The Beginning" at the start of Duplaix's briozene-fanging contribution to KT's innovative series of DJ sessions. *Wawow*, De La Soul, 4Him and Herbie are just some of the players brought into gentle collision with each other in a smoothly composed set of rapid ellipses. Mr Hermano's "Fee As The Morning Sun" also finds itself in fine company alongside an increasingly frenetic Mandala on "Bennibus". Computer generated announcements keep up a calmly enunciated

dialogue throughout, linking each track to the next with the steady assurance of beings in receipt of God's secret command.

## HEADMAN

IT ROUGH

GCMMA 023 19"

Zurich based DJ and painter Rebi Insana and Swiss sound engineer and musician Ralph Peter have surgically removed dance music's distinguishing outer layers to expose the taut musculature and pulsing catharsis that lies underneath. The effect is a uniquely ugly confrontation with rhythm. At its most brutally efficient – the unhammed thrust of "Touch Me" and the stacked keyboards running through "Anarchy" – there's some meat to Headman's motion. Attempts at grafting new vocal skins onto this rudimentary form, either sampled on "Flying" or live on a remix of the title track, are less convincing, however.

## I AM ROBOT AND PROUD

THE CATCH

CATMOBILE CM008 CD

Recording under a name derived from a slogan associated with Japanese god of mangé Obami Teaku's finest creation, Asho Boy, Canadian sound artist Shaw-Han Liem creates glittering electro-piano instruments of great infectious charm. Bright, playful and always accessible, like Tezuka-sensei's robot boy hero, this is music that celebrates the joys of electronic living. Machine codes, precise measures and busily preoccupied ciphers maintain a steady but unassuming background chatter while Liem quietly lays down a friendly pattern of sharp dance beats.

## KUBIK

OBLIQUE MUSIQUE

ZOUNDS 2001 CD

## ULF LOHMANN BECAUSE BEFORE

KOMPAKTK 13 CD

It's an established fact that no record release featuring a man wearing a crash helmet on the cover has ever been any good. Viktor Almro, aka Kubik, has bravely attempted to buck this trend, and almost gets away with it too. Unfortunately, his digitally twisted orchestral racket and cartoon phonetics tend to outlast both their original premise and their running time somewhat, leaving one good idea to founder in their own excess.

Ulf Lohmann's reluctance to give titles to any of his compositions puts just as resoundingly Andy sustained structures, predominantly involving synthetic strings and gently echoing percussions, mordantly reapproach the listener like an abandoned kid's toy lying in the gutter, demanding endlessly to know what it is they've done to deserve such offhand treatment.

## HANS PLATZGUMER

DENIAL OF SERVICE

DBKO 8 DISKOBESTREITER 006 CD

He does "This is all about music," begins the short but nicely hectoring sleeve-note to this

jazzy digital tribute to 70s bass, Rhodes electric piano and badly mixed studio drum kits. Platzgumer should really have let the failing helter-skelter funk an numbers like "Soulfire" and "Captain Solitude" speak for itself. "The Gambler" exudes the plausibly spoilt quality of an early 1980s John Carpenter movie soundtrack, while "Grrr" throws its weight around with a pushy beligerence that's quite endearing in an old fashioned sort of way.

## THE RIP OFF ARTIST

BRAIN SALAD SURGERY

HOT AIR AIRSHOCK 004 CD

Steering other people's titles is, without doubt, one of the finest accomplishments to which an innovative spirit can aspire. Emerson, Lake And Palmer should be flattened that a record of theirs has been honoured in such a fashion. Whereas ELP often credited misappropriations of William Blake and Cecil Taylor under that particular album title, Matt Haines slams together a sprawling resentful array of wry sound patches that tug at and tease expectations. Flipping from "Left Hemisphere" to "Right Hemisphere" in the middle of the set has a certain conceptual pith to it, but naming a composition "Spinach Meantime" is just the kind of stultified quirk you'd expect Keith Emerson to pull Starmel!

## AOKI TAKAMASA

SILICON

PROGRESSIVE FORM PFC1 001 CD

Kyoto resident Aoki Takamasa programs rhythmic interference for *Silicon*, a production unit he established with artist Taishi Masakazu to explore the electrostatic audio-visual spaces between art gallery installations and club culture. Giddingly allowing tightly controlled pulsations to combine themselves into organic clusters, Takamasa has developed a pleasantly hypnotic approach to sound. It's possible to imagine all manner of dance being steamed into his gentle progressive flow. Pinnoz collaborations with Cyibb, Monolite, Freedame and Vett suggest Takamasa is adept at shaping new social spaces for fresh creative thinking.

## TECHNOSIA

FUTURE MIX

TECHNOSIA TA012 CD

Technosia is an international pairing of DJs Arnal Khan from Hong Kong and Parvaan Charles Seigert, who are responsible for presenting *Future Mix*, a weekly radio slot broadcast in both English and Mandarin throughout the Guangdong province of South East China dedicated to the immeasurable power of the underground electronic dance beat. Impressed with singles and original excerpts from the show, their debut album is an impressively polished affair, as exemplified by the uplifting bustle of "Resurgence" and the mesmeric splendours of both "The Awakening" and "Hydra". Meanwhile, the more sedent mood on closing tracks "Zephyr" and "Beaune" come as a gentle reminder that it's always right somewhere in the world.

# Global

Reviewed by Richard Henderson

## FRANCO

### THE VERY BEST OF THE RUMBA GIANT OF ZAIRE

MANTECA MANT013 CD

As he never recorded in a consistent manner with the recording studio, and because his touring and record distribution seemingly avoided the West by design, it's hard for connoisseurs to get an accurate sense of guitars/street poet/bandleader Franco's superhuman significance in the scheme of modern African music. He was central to the Congolese postwar fetish for Cuban rhythms, and it was Franco who slowed and shaped those Latin riffs into the mbaïka rock that became his signature and the dance craze of several nations in the 70s. Other compilations have surveyed the Franco discography, but none have the consistency and nonstop feel of this Maneca disc, though one entitled *The Rough Guide to Franco*, benefits from notes by Congo Colossus biographer Graeme Evans. Both sets close with "Ateretse Na Sow," a warning against AIDS (which probably took Franco's own life in 1989). Rumba rock may have had its final seven and a half minutes in "Aida," whose loping intro and dynamic seben were first conceived as a commercial for a Volkswagen dealership.

## GEORGIAN REPUBLIC

### DRINKING HORNS & GRAMOPHONES 1902-1914

TRADITIONAL CROSSROADS 607024/037 CD

As pointed out in the recent feature on Petri Conci's Secret Museum Of Nonland, at the dawn of phonography much recording of traditional music was motivated largely by the desire of available product to play on newly available gramophones. The local outpost of Great Britain's Gramophone Company in Tbilisi, Georgia was no different, with the shop coupling its recording studio for folk choice in the pre-World War One era. Though the same languages and harmonic structures differ throughout Georgia, polyphony of an inventive and sparkling sort distinguishes all the vintage performances collected here by producer Carl Lanza. Kadas are also due to restoration engineer Bill Lacy, who dug the fragile plates of the Choir Of Tbilisi's "Gimneto Meti Gadomkheda," a work song that glows

like a hymn, from the grooves of a 1907 pressing. The six tracks by the Choir Of Malavani take liturgical singing onto another plane entirely, where iconoclasm is imbued with holy fire.

## THE GNAWA

### WORLD OF GNAWA

ROUNDER 071615003 3CD

The rolling gat of metallic qraqeb cymbals and the buzzing resonance of the gnawa bass can only mean that the Gnawa, a Moroccan confraternity whose members were originally imported as slaves from Mali, are close at hand. Especially close, in the case of this three disc set, seemingly taped in a theatrical setting without an audience present. As author Paul Bowles once pointed out, the Gnawa have particular skill in curing psychic ailments. Anyone caught in the irresistible spell of either the ensemble percussion and chanting heard on these recordings will attest to their restorative capabilities. Complete lyrics are included for the Islamic devotional material performed here, pointing up traces of the Gnawa's original sub-Saharan languages present amidst the Moroccan Arabic in which they usually sing.

## MEXICO

### BANDAS SINALOENSES: MUSICA TAMBORA

ARHOOLIE 70548 CD

Isolated on Mexico's Pacific coast, the unmyth bendo sounds of the state of Sinaloa were characterized in their original incarnation by busy parades ground drumming and rapidfire horn riffs played by huge brass sections, offset by requinto darrahs. Long ignored by the genteel A&R men of Mexico City's recording industry (mariachi being more to their liking), the Sinaloan groups were finally recorded comparatively late, in the 50s and early 60s. Helena Simonett, author of the dazzling *benda monograph*, *Banda: Mexican Musical Life Across Borders*, curated this compilation of exuberant performances. Romping through the Latin rhythm lexicon, groups such as Banda El Llano and Banda Los Guachimoches de Culiacán have their way with both regional corridos and European-derived vals and polkas too.

## MOHAMMAD AL-HARITHI

### THE HOUR OF SOLOMON

INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE 331692 CD

This collection of classical music from Yemen is personalized by the plaintive voice and especially muscular farrufcking hand of Mohammad Al-Harithi. Keith Richards among old players. This is not to deny the intimacy of his emanation or the authentic connection between the singer and the arch heritage of Yemen's homayni poetry, sung in the Sana'a dialect. The album's title is a reference to the Yemeni custom of taking the stellent out each day during the final hour of the afternoon, the better to slip into the contemplative state enjoyed at that time by the prophet Solomon, who visualized a procession of horses at sunset

## PADMAVIBHUSHAN DR ALI AKBAR KHAN

### INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

WATER LILY ACCORDIONS WLA0002 CD

Exquisitely inscribed in the ecclesiastic settings preferred by producer Kav Alexander (cf Ry Cooder and VM Bhakti's *A Meeting By The River*), sega-pancharan sandi versus Khan plays with wit, verve and impossible subtlety during this set of four ragas. The planets' fermentista tabla drummer, Swapan Chaudhury, is the perfect match for the wily plectrum master, exchanging riffs, the pair could be partners in animated conversation or opponents in a duel, changing roles within the span of a very few notes. In an idiom where jaw-dropping virtuosity is almost part of the furniture, it is great testament to the accrued wisdom and skill of Ali Akbar Khan that he eschews the note-cramped finales of many Hindustani classical musicians, seeking instead to achieve a critical mass of res (flavour or shading). Harder to convey, without a doubt, but infinitely more satisfying.

## ORQUESTA ARAGÓN EN ROUTE

WORLD VILLAGE/LUSAIRICA 488006 CD

Although both groups are veterans of Cuban music, there's no confusing the dreamy nostalgia of Havana's ubiquitous Cuban Vista Social Club with the more contemporary sound of Goyescia Aragón, whose weightless violins

and flutes dance over timbales and montuno piano, all capable of stopping on the presentis dime. Granted, Dequesa Aragón's modernist tendencies can put the met out from under itself as with the leaden beatboxing and rip of "Ola Cuba." Fortunately, the dreamy string intro to the torito "Can Solo Una Sonrisa" leads the group back to steamer footing, where it remains for the duration of this engaging disc, an invitation to dance in any one of a dozen styles.

## PERU

### TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF PERU

6: THE AYACUCHO REGION

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS SFW40650 CD

## PERU

### TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF PERU

7: THE LIMA HIGHLANDS

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS SFW40651 CD

The Ayacucho ("Corner of the Dead") region of Peru saw much bloodshed in the late 80s and early 90s as guerrillas of the Shining Path squared off against government forces. Only the past five years have researchers been able to chronicle its local music once more. The inhabitants of this corner of the Andes Mountains have integrated music into their annual festival cycles, the latter based on fertility patterns in plants and animals. A whole series of songs, set to the fingered tones of charangos (small ten stringed guitars), harps and violins, allows the reedy voices of young girls to take flight. On their heels comes the rubato weirdness of raft pincers, then a wailing chorus of grandmothers. Though the area has known the horrors of civil war, its women sing of woe strife: "How frightening is the life of a married nasa!"

The seventh round in the Smithsonian Folkways series devoted to traditional Peruvian music is a still more varied programme, drawn from the mountainous areas around Lima. Festival and carnival ritual songs, and ten styles of indigenous dance and music for popular theatre are contained here. Pieces, some like dreamy barn dance music, are led to dramatic presentations illustrating the clash between the Christians and the Moors. Closing the set are women singing (all too briefly) "La invenación" accompanied by harp and violin, underscored by buzzing, howling voices.

**cinemascope**  
monolake

produced by Robert Henke

released on monolake / imbalance computer music [ml/]

[www.monolake.de](http://www.monolake.de)

distributed by **SRD**

# HipHop

Reviewed by Hua Hsu

## AESOP ROCK DAYLIGHT EP DEF JUX DDX921 CD/EP

Coming off his universally poked Labor Days full-length, Aesop Rock returns with an EP and a dirty huiclet's size taunting, "How much can you take?" The young East Village is best known for his curmudgeonly Zepto meets Gasboy rhymes and his sideways star, like he's drunk on knowledge and "dogma dreams," and the new EP continues his cynical, late-night bad vibes through "the cycle of lost particles and leases." The man oozes syllables and bite. On "Nekal Patted Peccies," a shrillwaking Assap fingers coins in his pocket and denies a panhandling Vast Ave, nonchalantly bragging, "Get 20 ways to tell you 'Shut the fuck up!' of them are 2d bars long." The other one goes "SHUT THE FUCK UP!"

## BEATMINERZ WE RUN NYDA CONNECTION WHITE LABEL 12"

Two orphs left off the Beatminerz's *Braze 4 Impact* full-length find their way into circulation thanks to the shadowy world of bootlegging. Beating cop-show guitars introduce us to NYC Dors Gheetah Kilah and Ked G Rap on "Da Connection": "I bar in a tub with guns/Dry off with the chips." Ghost starts before skulking his way to the back of the church, where "Donated nothing/Hit the preacher's wife." Koal Genius sounds amber as ever with one of his bleeding dantes: "What you whores wan?/Your mother gettin' found inside of a Ford truck?/Smellin' like four skunks?/Cut into four chunks/Shot down and not found for four months?" MDP map up on the other side. Jane out Lil Fame's bulbous litags on "Ra Ra NY" and you realize that horney's got one of the prettiest voices in rap, even when he's springing venom like "I'm the motherfucker reason Maze Jaund God" or doing a call-and-response "911! 911! 911!" chorus with partner Billy Daise. Perennial selenian Teflon guests with the sports relevance of the year, "Reported to be so dope Darryl Strawberry tried to snort it." Unfortunately, The Beatminerz rip the spot-runners with a bong timpani and end Robin Hood bass scroop.

## BIG L HARLEM'S FINEST – A FREESTYLE HISTORY RAKUUS RAINFOREST 12"

It's always nice to glorify the departed, but Lamont Coleman, tragically shot in 1999 at the age of 25, was all that and a state of chaps. The prototypical befit rapper, Big L was telling sucker MCs since his sees, fist with his local Harlem World clique and then as a member of DTC. The birth of a mafioso is captured here with L's "Live Fire 125" lifestyle off the legendary Harlem Handpeck mixtape. Nothing, 20 or rappers talk that monster shit and couldn't kill time." Gas-boy gunshaws, meet the gun-spy fly guy whose "Lyrics are louder than morning breath." It's street reputation never quite came to fruition on wax, and these dingy radio freestyles and discarded battle rhymes make up the golden

debts left behind. Harlem's Finest reminds you that there were some would-be heroes better at dodging failure than bad luck.

## BRAINTAX

BIRO FUNK  
LOW LIFE RECORDS LOWLITE CO

It may not be as skewed as Roots Manuva, or as straight up funky as Asher D & Daddy Freddy or Denz B, or as crowd-pleasing as Nilla Killa, or as Reggae Roy as London Posse, but this rather good album from the Shepherds Bush-based Denzis transplant is about as good as British Hip-Hop gets. It won't win over critics and it doesn't cure that terminal illness affecting the Queen's Hip-Hop (that pea soup accent towering around and obscuring the beat rather than riding on it), but Biro Funk excels at what the British have always done well: insouciant, dead-set blues. Even when Brantax is trying to get his swerve on, the beats (by Brantax, Harry Love, Farms G, Beaynham and others) are subdu'd, misaligned, off-tail, almost B'DAY in their minimization, the atmosphere isn't dissimilar from something like CLOUDEDAD even though this definitely strayed up Hiphop, nothing "experimental." *Futureing* is a potential masterpiece in which London has become a humid, fetid swamp around which the narrator toads avoiding trifles but casting malice at Piccadilly Circus: It is perfectly British Hip-Hop's very own "Waterloo Sunset" (without the optimism of a certain auteur). Melvin slept-in Paris and our blazin' "Freestyle" gets anansied, with an indignant Mel smirking "the rule's back" while napping half the Golden Age pups and clamping, "I discovered rap like I'm Ferdinand Magellan." On Brantax's obscure edge to his Do Re-Me-Me, he cautes, "Dots today just don't suit me/Godfather D will cut me like sushi/Twice as nice on the slice the day's rather precise/Twice as fine as a chop device." Marijuana and club-drugs might have sounded fast rap's death knell, but in Edan's weird world it's Hot Day Desire, all day and everyday. As a public service, the Bl. Jackson of rap also includes a crude recording of a 1969 streetcorner battle between then-university prep tykes Prince P and Lord Finesse. Even if you didn't discern their rhymes, close your eyes and imagine giving the Rhyme Inspector five feet and an infinite eyeline of high-top faders.

## DMX VS STEVEN HAWKINS RUFF RYDERS ANTHEM SAFECODE 12"

Third Sight once bragged of having "rhymes like a sonnet," but they only meant it as a smile. Caving into the massive market of scientifical B-boys eager to hear DMX rhyme like an actual, living scientist, this troubling 45 emerges with a "Steven Hawkins" (sic) voice impersonator covering X's "ycle or die" anthem. Producer Swizz Beatz' repetitive synth see-saw is replaced here on the subset of keyboards as a computer-generated voice lectures, "Look what you done started/Afford it, you got it, you gonna have to shut it/Now your damn depped out!" The cradle-poo-persussion implies Tigermoth or the Southeast, but it's far less raw and/or disturbing than Kel6to's elatedness "Straight Outta Compton" from a couple years back. Given how often DMX says "tugger" and "batch" is the original song, and given how tunny those words sound doored of any humanity, you can only assume that this was done out of jest. Perhaps it's a too-close park, playing fun in producer Swizz Beatz's proximity for using the factory-standard beats programmed in his keyboard. Mayte Hawkins' computer-programmed vocals are supposed to

symbolise the disposable, mechanical and lazy quality of Swizz's nonetheless catchy beats or the worn face of X's language. Or maybe some intelligent Denzel Musicians just went laptop-happy. The episode joces a Common local sample over an amateur Hermit chip job, with the phrase, "I just went to innovate" being repeated ad infinitum and ad nauseam. Coming Denz, Dre protege Kokane battles the duplicitous Solal.

## EDAN THE DJ

FAST RAP  
TKD PROMO MC

Mc Edan ain't no pike, he slams the microphone when he's done and makes sure it's broken. No worries, he just holds onto the DJ booth and takes over from there. 100 odds later, you've wiped the dust from your chin, worked the kink from your neck and stripped off the knee-pads and miner's helmet to dig for some of E's treats. He regales us with a fine assortment of fast life, specialising in the obscure and stored but always keeping things teetering above 100 bpm in particular. Melvin slept-in Paris and our blazin' "Freestyle" gets anansied, with an indignant Mel smirking "the rule's back" while napping half the Golden Age pups and clamping, "I discovered rap like I'm Ferdinand Magellan." On Brantax's obscure edge to his Do Re-Me-Me, he cautes, "Dots today just don't suit me/Godfather D will cut me like sushi/Twice as nice on the slice the day's rather precise/Twice as fine as a chop device." Marijuana and club-drugs might have sounded fast rap's death knell, but in Edan's weird world it's Hot Day Desire, all day and everyday. As a public service, the Bl. Jackson of rap also includes a crude recording of a 1969 streetcorner battle between then-university prep tykes Prince P and Lord Finesse. Even if you didn't discern their rhymes, close your eyes and imagine giving the Rhyme Inspector five feet and an infinite eyeline of high-top faders

## JAY-Z

THE BLUEPRINT  
RCCA 314959596 CD/20P

Lots of speculation about the money he's made and ghostwriters he's paid, but Jay Z's like Teflon none of the bad karma sticks. Noting Jay Z is a sort of sport these days, as a hustler, misogynist and master of smacking the frosty from his lips, he represents all that is negative and wacky about America — he's your classic CEO, right down to Rockefeller's reference of his record label "top," built on the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back" and West Coast dialects. Is it a good a number one rap hit as you'll get without enlisting The Neptunes, s/he-shy When young girls (see Jadakiss) drop jewels, Jay-Z's wise enough to drop some lines, just to court the "Nylite" audience. "Song Cry" tries because Jay himself can't, and on "Renegade," an "Eeny And Ivory" for 2002, he and Eminem shaped themselves through the valley of critics and moakes who just don't get it. But don't mistake Jay for one of these sensitive drags who need hugs. On "The Takeover," Jay-Z barks on Nas and pret-tized

Mobb Deep nippa Prodigy over an equally savage Deeks sample. "You little fuck, I got money stacks bigger than you." Antithetically speaking, Jay breaks Nas's career down to "one good album a decade." Dutchie wally

## ODD NOSDAY REJECT ODD NOSDAY NOSDAYA OVER CO

Sects can do funny things to your boner, and Nosday, who came of age in last-decided Dixie, is lived proof. He's your ghotage man and Rigo Man rolled into a fat one. Dr. Sample is the redneck trucker, processing the found sounds, loosing the dentus and coupling Earthmaster skits with Indian families singing "Happy Birthday." Nosday claims he never outgrew his novice fire-piece sampler, instead commanding himself to exploring its every function, contour and imperfection. Reject collects out-takes from cLUDGEO, same: Mosh singles and "a bunch of crap" that went straight to cassette. Turned green, bad lounge records sound even more exotic backdrops and the distinctly Midwestern-sounding, dehumanized drumbreak nights throughout. Not beats or narratives so much as small victories, chance discoveries, little hugs and specific starks, think of Reject as glimpses into Nascent's bedroom, before the Ninja Tune payout netted him an MPC, 40 tracks later and you feel like you were the one forced-bumpkin connoisseur, televangelism and Simon & Garfunkel as a kid.

## THAWFOR WHERE THAWGHT IS WORSHIPPED 2.2 COCONE MUSIC C2D00930-6 12"

The Windy City of Chicago isn't enough Thawfor ("Thoughts Forever") and friends are looking beyond to Landis's villa in the clouds, where anti-intellectualism isn't an everyday sport. The Opus's (Rubenrood) production for "Where Thawgth is Worshipped 2.2" is wide-eyed and massive like the Zobrazine horizon, dotted with little fluffy clouds, the stop-bang hands of Gae and an inching inkling of impending decay. It's creepy, to say the least. "2.2" features kyuss-ago Slug (Amorphis), Rob Smith (Sonic Sun), Mike Ladd and Thaw doing the pangs. Slug, by far the most "conventional" member of the lot, shuffles the cauldron boom boom thru ya hands' raspbeak across Opus's pastiche until his words break, concluding that jumper's got him "caught between Dr Seuss and the blues." Smith is his usual Sonic self, floating words freely with anchors away, rhyme schemes be damned. "Sensored hopes through the daytime seas," Stated for a sonic brain-generayed stroke. Ladd astutely drives the point home: "I play the infinite space between one's two temples," "Left Behind," another excellent Opus jogs chores like Selected Ambient on uppers. Thawfor, beginning to get back to that deadly place "before space and time," converses with Etterny and warts. "Will this role is completed?" in a stave to master, armed with only our dreamz/The majesty of all being/that Etterny sings." Call it Fear And Trembling rep

# Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by David Keenan

## FRED ANDERSON ON THE RUN DELMARK DG348 CD

The re-emergence of Chicago tenorist Fred Anderson has been one of the real joys of the past five years. For someone who played such a major role in the synthesis of the new Chicago scene, he remained criminally under-represented for far too long. He was a founding member of the AACM and ran the Velvet Lounge, one of the city's hottest jazz venues, since 1982. On *The Run* catches him live at the Velvet Lounge with his long-time shadow drummer Hamid Drake, who grew up with Anderson's family, and bassist Tua Arie. Maybe it's because he's on solid home turf, but Anderson sounds almost ready backbreak on the first track, "Ladies In Love", a solo performance filled with the sweepingly jagged lines of Lester Young. Still, once the trio lock in on the title track the energy level leaps, with Drake picking out sparse echoes around his sit as Anderson runs off some meltingly pure and satisfyingly breezy runs.

## ANTHONY BRAXTON QUARTET (DORTMUND) 1976 MOTECLOGY 997 CD

Anyone still daft enough to maintain that Anthony Braxton is shooting much more heads than the heart with his music would do well to spend an afternoon with this gleefully recording, featuring the world-beating quartet of Braxton, trombonist George Lewis, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Barry Altschul. The life-up was together for barely six months, yet on the evidence of this session, their legendary reputation is entirely justified. The addition of trombonist George Lewis, who stepped in to replace trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, seems to be the pivotal change here, tipping the scales more towards romping, raucous fun on Braxton's material, as Lewis shows in all sorts of hefty brass statements and barreling riffs. Braxton comes back at him with some gerry-jelly, light-headed shapes, just winking and laughing, and soon the whole band is marching across the stage to the ecstatic, vocal delight of the audience.

## DUAL (DUEL) CUCOOLORET NO NUMBER CD

Dual are two twisted NYC improvisers, guitarist Doug Theriault and electronics manipulator Ed Chang, and (*Duel*) is a compilation of free noise bouts recorded between 1999 and 2001. It's an intense and exhilarating disc, sounding like Derek Bailey's drum 'n' bass album as re-visited by Alec Empire's Digital Hardcore Recordings. Theriault veers from Bailey-style sashimi-sage to big Van Halen licks and churning industrial fuzz, while Chang goes best when he simply lays down a thumping, distorted beat. The record company puts it best: "No holds barred, hardcore free improv in the worst possible sense between two improvisers at their peak (of the day), speaking in a language no one but themselves could possibly ever hope to (or want to) understand." Totally gross and totally fantastic.

## SCOTT FIELDS ENSEMBLE THIS THAT ACCENTIONS ALP024 CD

Guitarist Scott Fields grew up in the Hyde Park area of Chicago's Southside, the very turf that birthed the AACM, and the Ensemble — a floating collective that over the years has included such immensities as cometist Rob Mazurek, percussionist Michael Zerang and guitarist Jeff Parker — is named in tribute to The Art Ensemble Of Chicago. This *This That* is a heavy live session, pairing Fields with cellist Peggy Lee and drummer Dylan Von Der Schyff, and it's even better than Mazurek's extraordinary tribute to the plays of David Murray that surfaced earlier this year. Whereas that was a subtle, conversational work, *This That* finds Fields going off on massive proto-Motown flurries that land somewhere between the early motorpsycho extremes of guitarists Makoto Kawauchi's work with Musica Transversa and the heavy melodic staking work of free jazz guitarists Muhal Mufoz. Cells and drums provide a skewed counterpoint, punctuating around the margins as Fields channels straight through the heart.

## WAYNE HORVITZ NOTWITHSTANDING THA DAY SONGLINE 8051810599 CD

Wayne Horvitz has been a big deal on New York's downtown jazz scene for a while now, playing with John Zorn and Bill Frisell, touring with Zorn and Piaget, and contributing to electric/jazz hybrid Ponca. *Notwithstanding Tha Day* follows up his last Songlines CD, American Bandstand, and consists of more light 'jazz' nostalgia with an acoustic piano bar aesthetic. His group is technically astute but rigidly functional, mostly there to cushion Horvitz's generic piano work, though occasionally eccentric guitarista Timothy Young breaks into some fairly satisfying bluesy riffs. Horvitz's playing is textbook schmaltz, swinging in the most upright sense of the word, but it's at his best when he uses the space to spread out in his own time. Listen to the opening in "Two Tins And Another". *Notwithstanding Tha Day* incorporates many facets of American roots music — all of that history, though, as seen through Horvitz's eyes, becomes one half of a dual slant.

## PETER KOWALD & DAMON SMITH MIRRORS — BROKEN BUT NO DUST BALANCE POINT RECORDS BPR007 CD

Bassist Damon Smith originally came out of the US hardcore scene, playing electric bass in various avant-punk combos under the bewitching spell of Ministry/Firehouse bassist Mike Watt until a chance encounter with Peter Kowald's Dutch Euro-UK avant-garde band. With Kowald promptly switched to acoustic double bass and let it all hang on. Since then he's played with free musicians like bassist Alan Silva and the late saxophonist Greg Spearman, but this date was the first time he'd come face to face with monitor. Nor that you'd guess it from listening: Smith gets instantly with Kowald and the whole

session has the feel of one multi-directional instrument drone and throbbing rather than any notion of call and response or follow the leader. Right from the get-go the duo follow their initial idea with rigorous intention, and the toads — the first of which is a live performance, the rest short studio sketches — are characterized by continuous organic movement, whether the duo are generating dark drumming vibrations or dizzy weeping drones.

## JOE MCPHEE & JOE GIARDULLO SPECIFIC GRAVITY BIRDBOARD BIR0021 CD

Joe Giardullo is an American m/sb needful with some eccentric theories regarding pitch relationships, where tonal centers become magnetic pull points. He calls his concept "gravity music" and has used this to organize large ensembles in semi-directed improvisations. Yet this meeting with freebrand saxophonist Joe McPhee feels eight years away from such academic discourse, full of anarchically insinuating and dark breath work. Both players move around a variety of instruments — McPhee on alto clarinet, soprano sax and valve trombone; Giardullo on flute, bass clarinet and soprano sax — and both incorporate minimal electronics in the tracks. The real jewel is a sweet reading of Coltrane's "After You", simplified and streamlined into a sad gospel refrain that brings to mind Albert Ayler at his most beautiful.

## OPEN SYSTEMS OPEN SYSTEMS MARGE 25 CD

Open Systems are a quartet formed to play at the wedding of the French jazz crocs Alexandre Picapont and Laurence De Cock. Two days before the group — saxophonist Asaf Ashkenazi, trumpet Hugh Ragin, bassist Peter Kowald and drummer Horndrone Coke playing together for the first time — cut the session in a Paris studio. It's a heavyweight line-up and the players are on real lyrical form, especially Tashar and Kowald's interaction on "Dream Waves"; *[For Laurence And Alexandre]* is an absolute joy, as Kowald pulls wisping circles from his bass while Tashar plings cross-register arcs from his bass clarinet. "Hearts Remembrance" pairs Coke's lunar vocals with Kowald's throat singing to dark effect as the group hold an otherworldly shade in mid-air. Kowald's "Father And Mother" is dedicated to Albert Ayler, and Ashkenazi and Ragin, with Ragin suggesting ethereal countermeasures on the trumpet, almost succeed in resurrecting the spirit of the Ayler brothers.

## EUGENE B REDMOND BLOOD LINKS AND SACRED PLACES KEP 01 CD

Eugene Redmond is a poet from St Louis with connections to the Black Arts movement of the 60s and 70s. As well as publishing poetry collections, including *Songs From An Af/Pron* and *River Diaries*, he was instrumental in founding the Black River Writers, a group who

worked closely with St Louis's own proto-R&B, The Black Artists' Group. *Blood Links And Sacred Places* is from the same label that sourced *The Ark And The Ash*, a previously unreleased recording of the poet Henry Dumas and Sun Ra in conversation, and it's every bit as lovingly assembled. *Blood Links...* was recorded live in the studio in 1973 in front of an invited audience, who whoop and chorus throughout. Redmond's oratory style is hip and musical, a less aggressive Amiri Baraka, and like Sun Ra he's obsessed by mythical parents and wendyplay. He's backed here by Jerry Daniels on acoustic guitar, Ed Jefferson on percussion and the Pegleg on some wonderful Lol Coxhill-sounding soprano. Redmond leads on the tambourine as he whips his audience through some sensual poetry.

## MATT TURNER CRUSHED SMOKE TAUTOLGY 014 CD

Turner is a cellist who has studied with bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Joe Maneri at the New England Conservatory of Music. Additionally, he has appeared on deck slinger pianist Marilyn Crispell and James Carter. Yet there's no trace of the brains and soulwork that normally accompany your average college-approved busker. Instead, Turner is equally at home with jazz standards and avert rock blowouts, as he is swinging freely. *Crushed Smoke* is his second solo cello disc and far from being some toothless trial through ostentatious technique, the whole session is fuelled with a spontaneous exploratory fire as Turner embraces the extremes of the instrument. He approaches the cello more as a total sound-making instrument rather than 'merely a strong one, often drumming on the body or playing way up past the bridge, but it all feels rigorously focused and full of detail. The acoustic tracks work best, as Turner weaves all sorts of satisfying tackle sounds from his instrument, from sonorous breath to haunted creaks, but the electric tracks break it all up nicely, especially the Tony Conrad-style drones of "Clouds".

## CUONG VU COME PLAY WITH ME KNITTING FACTORY KF-W291 CD

Come Play With Me takes the epic sci-fi peaks of Miles Davis circa Big Fun and anchors them with a straight rocking, stopped down rhythm section. Vietnamese-born trumpeter Cuong Vu has the reach and power of Davis, and is an emotionally expressive soloist, sucking strands out of every note. His current day job is as part of the Pat Metheny Group, but on this evidence he's wasting his talents. Like Davis, he's also fascinated by the static process, with the result that most of the tunes are given a deep wash of reverb and delay, some sections consisting solely of the F/X feeding off each other before Vu comes along across the consciousness skies. Drummer John Hollenbeck and electric bassist Stomu Yamashta play it gloriously straight yet push forward with a cumulative force that totally belies the simplicity of their contribution. □

# Modern Composition

Reviewed by Andy Hamilton

## JOHN ADAMS

EL NIÑO

NONESUCH 756899834 2CD

"I love Messiaen," I wanted to write a *Messiaen*," John Adams commented only half-jokingly. *El Niño* (*The Wind*) is a "Nativity oratorio". Well, if Bing Crosby and Slade can have their Christmas discs, so can Adams. This superb recording features Dawn Upshaw and Willard White with the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin under Kent Nagano, and Paul Hillier's Theatre Of Voices plus the London Voices. No lack of resources here, then! In addition, the spectacle of the Paris premiere also included dancers and a film. Adams's literary and musical resources are both eclectic – from the Bible and Apocrypha plus Hildegard Von Bingen and Spanish poet. The USA's most performed composer continues to combine accessibility with substance in a palpitating performance.

## LYELL CRESSWELL

ANAKIE

NMC D077 CD

Though he's been a full time composer settled in Christchurch since 1985, Cresswell was born in 1944 in Wellington, New Zealand. Consequently these solo instrumental pieces from the 80s and 90s, performed by members of The Henden Ensemble, have Moon titles. *Anakie* (*Alone*) is for solo flute, while *Moan* titrises. *Anake* (*Alone*) is for solo flute, while means "alone". The disc concludes with Variations On A Theme By Charles Ives for flute and oboe. Cresswell was drawn to Ives's "crazy mixture of hums, tunes, camping songs, slogs, marching bands – all echoes of my own upbringing". A disc made up almost entirely of solo instruments might seem tough going – this kind of music is tough to write too, I'm assured – but there aren't any forgettable bits there, brilliant and eminently pleasurable.

## MARK DRESSER TRIO

AQUIFER

CRYPTOGRAPHPHONE PRIMO CD

The trio members have appeared several times in these pages. Desmarais' hypnopno is a prepared piano development of Cage and Nancarrow, with moving as well as fixed parts attached to the instrument. Matthias Ziegler has a vision of a "solo polyphonic music", playing a

range of flutes, some with mics embedded inside the instrument, making it sound like anything but a flute. Some of the pieces here are jazz – "Modern Time", and the bluesy "Digestive" with Marley sounding Morleigh – while others have familiar lock-step rhythms. Only Dresser's instrument is immediately recognisable, on an appealing set of computers.

## DIETRICH EICHMANN

FÜRHE SAMMLUNG ENIGER  
NACHT PORTIONEN

DAKNUSS OHNEH CD

## GAME AND EARNEST

CONCERTO FOR CHESS  
PLAYERS, ETC

DAKNUSS OHNEH CD

Prev. It's not clear whether Game And Ernest is the piece or the group, but composer Dietrich Eichmann, whose quirky split headed here, is involved in both discs from this new German label. Concerto For Chess Players, Etc is a concert worthy of chess master Anthony Braxton, and the sleeve notes are characteristically philosophical. Two chess players, one of them Eichmann's composition teacher Wolfgang Rihm, sit at stage play on a prepared chessboard, while squares activate a "module" when a piece is placed on them. Four composers – Eichmann, Christoph Gündel, Uwe Kampf and Wolfgang von Stürmer – each write 16 modules of electronic music, and four live improvisers also perform.

Nacht Portionen (Night Portions) is the recording of the work's 1989 premiere in Essen. Though the subtitle is "Seventh Piano Piece", the instrument plays little part in proceedings. Part one is a long sampling track with drum machine and spoken or intoned interjections. In later parts there's a countertenor of voices, and in the coda, circus-style electronics go bongo. The result is a theatre of the absurd where Eichmann's sense of humour runs away with him.

## HARMONIA ENSEMBLE

HELLINI

MATERIALI SONORI MAS096154 CD

A poignant collection of music for the maestro's flûte, mostly by Nebi Rota but also by group

member Demetrio Politi and sometime Polini collaborator Luis Bacalov. Of course, it includes the theme to *La Dolce Vita*. The music is performed by The Harmonia Ensemble with The Archduke String Orchestra. The Ensemble's clattering Drö Döder bookends the disc with own compositions introduce Metronosa and ULuna Del Sagre, both of them in a Fellini vein with prominent accordion.

## ANNA LINDAL

SITTING SILENTLY..

CONTENT SAKE4017 CO

At first I didn't sit silently for long enough to absorb this solo violin recital of music by Lars Hollnagel and Hans Otto – apparently universal in comparison with the Lyell Cresswell disc. But the suggestion that Otto is a German composer with a very un-Germanic Morton Feldman aesthetic made me try again. Sitting quietly and often silently, Anna Lindal spars slow-moving lines filled with meaningful pauses, and the listener's patience is rewarded. Hollnagel (born 1950) and Otto (born 1926) have a lot in common, and if anything the Swedish composer is closer to Feldman. Both speak of a Zen-like approach – which was often attributed to John Cage with little justification – and Otto wrote *Alltagsspiel* (Every Day Music) after Zen courses in Japan and it was to the Zen temple in Dürren Hallitus that he went that in *Stile Führer* Der Stein there is no causal relationship between the pitches, and "each tone should be played as if it alone existed" – very Zen-like, and beautiful.

## INGRAM MARSHALL

DARK WATERS

NEW ALBION NA112 CD

Marshall's Sibylus obsession continues with the enchanting title piece for cor anglais and tape, a cross between late 70s electronic composer Sibylus in His Radio Corner and the recent *Kingdom Come*. In the latter piece and Dark Waters, Marshall espouses that he finds Sibylus's tone poem *The Swan Of Tuonela* in mind, while the approach espouses the electronic treatment found on Radio Corner. Dark Waters was written for Libby Van Cleve. She plays oboe d'amore – the baroque oboe with lower register and darker timbre – on Holy Ghosts, this time with live

digital delay processing of material from Bach and Belli (Marshall asked Jaza to study gamelan in 1971). The final piece of this beautiful collection of 90s compositions is *Rave*, which samples biscuits and Asian instruments, and synthesises them in a wacky dramatic final part.

## JOHN PALMER

ENCOUNTER..

SARGASSO 32336 CD

Palmer was born somewhere, lived elsewhere and was academically trained – it says here, but his reclusive past isn't paralleled by the music, which is directly and often painfully expressive. Encounters pit Western harpsichord (Jude Chapman) against Eastern percussion, notably tabla (Peter Lockett), fusing them through an electronic patch extravagant in its effects and soundstaging. *Hayanya* is for Peter Van Stockma's solo oboe, with florid ornamentation, pitchbending and multiphonics. But in *Eraphis* for cello and tape, dedicated to a friend who committed suicide by jumping in front of a train, it was a mistake to play the tape part so obviously from tape loops, as well as female voice and cello. A raw and exciting disc.

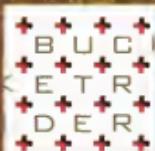
## NIKOS SKALKOTTAS

32 PIECES FOR PIANO

BBG 11334 2CD

The life story of this Greek modernist composer (1904-49) was a desperately sad one. Schreiner listed him among the handful of his students who became "real composers". But while in Berlin he received low performances, and even fewer when he returned to Greece in 1933, forcing him to make a living as a rank and file orchestra violinist. When he died in 1949 he was unknown, unpublished and uncared-for. Pianist Nikolaos Sarmatzas is among those resurrecting his output, and many of the pieces of this cycle of 32 receive their first recording here. Skalkottas wrote in a raw, elaborate serial system, and also composed tonal and modal works, borrowing from folk music and jazz. The 32 Pieces are constructed in accord with a Golden Section, and dances included within are also associated with concrete ideas – notably the brief but explosively visceral *Katastrofe Auf Dem Unwelt* (Fimmusik).

Chapter Twelve: in which Dr Jim buys an ad to generate interest in these antipodean avatars of the avantgarde...



Bucketrider  
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noise meets silence, chess  
meets order, and detourism  
meets the muse.

Grindhouse: Bell Magazine (75) includes: Head, Thorsten  
Hecht, Svenja, CTI KAR, UKL, Bell (Ezine 11) (EZ 3881)  
Barbary Vers, EZ 3871, Viva! Feminist Media, www.viva.org  
81 Franklin Street, Ulladulla, NSW, 2579, AUSTRALIA &  
Symphonialta (www.hyperionrecords.com)



Candlesnuffer  
Guitar - first through the  
windscreen, unloosed from  
captivity, savaged beyond  
our best recognition.

# Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

## KOJI ASANO A SECOND DAM

SOLISTIC 33 CD

Amassing a body of work as diverse as it is prolific, Koji Asano's output has averaged out a little over a CD per month during the past year. Closely related in process to the recent *Autumn Meadow*, *A Second Dam* is entirely based upon recordings from a closed circuit feedback system processed through digital means. Where the preceding album's use of feedback was taking yet ominous, this one is caustic and invasive. Very high frequencies augmented by magnetic fluctuations and piercing squeals marked by metallic tinges spiral through the album's extended single track. Asano takes great care to insure that none of his nefarious tones appears static by constantly and slightly shifting them. *A Second Dam* is a very tough album to listen to, something like Whitehouse's more seriously extreme albums, where William Bennett comes closest to perpetuating his ultimate transgressions, leaving behind a workable contradiction between a gauzy form and the tenuous inducing texture.

## SCOTT ARFORD & RANDY HY YAU

EDIT FOR UNCONSCIOUSNESS

ACUSLICURE RESEARCH AUS003 CD

As director of the San Francisco sound art organization 23live!, Scott Arford (aka Radresende) and Randy Yau have been instrumental in curating a number of exceptional festivals featuring performances from John Duncan, Zbigniew Karkowski and Francisco López. *Edit for Unconsciousness* establishes Arford and Yau as some equals with the artists they have promoted. You often the broader spectrum on the album's opening track. It erupts with jagged static cracklings that collapse into nervous electrical textures. By contrast, the final piece is a gentle, shimmering drone built from a chorus of digital chips. Arford incorporates similarly gauzy textures and harsh mechanical hammerings, which he steadily dissolves and softens into gray masses of vibrating noise.

## BIRCHVILLE CAT MOTEL WE COUNT THESE PRAYERS...

CORPUS HERMETICUM HERM003 CD

New Zealander Campbell Keane once described his Birchville Cat Motel project as "Black Flag plays Music For Airports," and then went on to compare Slobot with Phil Niblock. Against the odds, Birchville Cat Motel come close to embodying such aesthetic crossroads. We Count These Prayers... balances the controlled minimalism of Slobot and Niblock with punk antagonism. It opens with a dense symphony of ugly blurs from an overloaded electrical circuit, malcontent amplifier buzz and the incrementally building feedback from plucking a microtonic close to its speaker, all of which suggest a guitar improv on a bad night. Yet these are precisely the sorties Keane is after, and he gently shapes them with complementary metallic scrapping, mottled gongs, guitar guitar drives, shorthorn demodulations and a tremolo wobble

created by jangling a screwdriver between the guitar strings. If each individual sound is caustic, put together the results are incredibly evocative.

## NEIL CAMPBELL & RICHARD YOUNGS HOW THE GARDEN IS

HARPENDEN NO NUMBER LP

I find myself returning to Richard Youngs' work each winter, when the blustery weather best fits his avant-folk expressionism tempered by existential bitter sweetnes. How The Garden Is, his collaboration with longtime friend Neil Campbell, is more in line with Campbell's work in the Vorticabated Orchestra, working up a series of monologues from the garage hammering of guitar strings using a full set of cutlery, a minimalist Cate/Cordell-like violin skins and a dawning of bells, chunky Castanets and penny whistles. Doseariously Youngs emits a mournful vocal wail in the distance or frappucks a sad melody plucked from the history of UK folk to complete another fine album of wintery beauty.

## EARTH SUNN AMPS AND SMASHED GUITARS

NO QUARTER NORTH CO

Snugly smacking at all the drakuk yakels who inevitably cry out "Freebird" during any performance, Earth's live album, which was recorded in London at Dixie in 1995, opens with a nearly unrecognizable cover of the Southern rock standard. Of course, Earth obliterates the song as a detuned, slow motion plod through an incredibly thick wall of distortion and amorphous disconcert riffs. The multiple guitars then meander through unfomed edges and glazed feedback. In addition to this fest of pie-dropping stupor originally released on Blast Fest!, Sunn Amps And Smashed Guitars features the slightly more structured, but just as brutally slow, demos which parallel the Melvins' primitive digital Metal. Unfortunately these pale in comparison to the thick masses of the live set. Complainers who don't want to pay collectors' prices should apply here, otherwise, if you're looking for more of Earth's gut-churning power, you'd do better with the Earth tribute group SunnO))).

## ESO STEEL TECHNOLOGY OF SLEEP

20 CITY 2008 LP

## BRANDON LABELLE SHADOW OF A SHADOW

SELEKTON SK-0008 CD

Brandon Labelle and Eso Steel represent two increasingly divergent attitudes in the manipulation of environmental and contact microphone recordings. On the one hand, Eso Steel (New Zealander Richard Francis, now living in Akron) reconstructs his recordings through a poetic and almost intuitive sensibility, on the other, Labelle's sounds sound as a parallel vehicle to his post-structuralist verbiage about the complex semantic webs between the realms of language and sound, private and public,

synthetic and natural, etc. Outside of their conceptual differences, Eso Steel and Labelle provide strikingly similar and adeptly composed albums of electrical buzzings and fizzing drones, alongside the crisp crackles of a contact microphone amplifying tiny testost situations. Yet the broader contexts and intentions of the two artists sets them apart; Eso Steel provides a few discernible clues to shape his sounds into metaphors of an internal circuitry that ring quietly while the body is at rest; Labelle's cerebral exercises tend to limit his music to a merely functional extension of the written word. Sometimes, less is more.

## ORA FINAL

ICRCR04 CD

Final is the last documentation of the loose UK doo-wop collective Ora, which involved around the activities of Darren Tate and Andrew Chale inside Colin Potter's IC Studios (also the location for a number of Current 93 and Nurse With Wound recordings). Drawing from their heritage within the underground cassette culture, Ora produced a handful of haphazardly pressed CDs. Since those limited productions were out of print, they have produced two bootlegges from this back catalogue, first the Aureau double album on Streamline and now Iota on Potter's IC label. Where many of the Ora recordings found on Aureau employed the opiated desire to blur the lines between organic and synthetic construction techniques, Final opts for a more electronic palette, with the textures from field recordings, bowed metals and distant stars taking a backseat role to the wags and swirls of densely processed analogue syntheses. The notable exception to the sublime calm of the album is the collaborative piece with Lot Conill, whose saxophone squall is atypically confrontational with the eccentric drosses of Ora.

## STEVE RODEN SCHINDLER HOUSE

MAK CENTER FOR ART & ARCHITECTURE NO

NUMBER CD

Mastered by Frank Lloyd Wright, Rudolf Michael Schindler's designs in and around Los Angeles incorporated the aesthetics of European modernism with the heterogeneous needs of a particular client, the surrounding environment and culture at large. For a commission from the MAK Center for Art & Architecture, lowcase composer Steve Roden applied an appropriately similar conceptual agenda to a sound installation within Schindler's house/studio. Roden is one of many from the lowcase aesthetic to describe his work within an architectural context, yet his ways of achieving these metaphors are closer to the improviser's intuition than the controlled mathematics of engineering. Thus, Roden's homage to Schindler's house — with its microscopic amplifications of bamboo, wooden panes and wooden beams transformed into an open-ended mass of tiny events — extrapolates from the sonic details of Schindler's house. It may be a minor criticism, but one has to wonder if Roden

would have come up with the same results in the house next door.

## THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND TRIUMPHANT INC FEATURING ELIZABETH CLARE PROPHET

LOUDS OF AMERICAN

DOOMSDAY CULTS VOL 14

FATHIWAISANIGHT! I AM PRESENCE KB-173 LP

Curiously in the twilight of its life as an American cult, the Church Universal and Triumphant has been an ecumenical marvel in its ability to bridge most faiths and ideologies, at the while acquiring a substantial fortune from the sale of books, tinctures and constantly updated cassettes of "studies" from the Church's spiritual leader Elizabeth Clare Prophet. Packaged as a parody of the releases from Smithsonian/Folklife, this document of Prophet's dictations offers insight more into the Church's antagonism toward mainstream society than into her claims to be the messenger for the "Ascended Masters". Christ, Buddha, Hercules, Guruvate, Shiva, Pope John XIII and K-17 (the cult uses the name for the head of the Cosmic Secret Service — the spiritual elite in is need of policing too). As bizarre as Cult's doctrine are, the dictations are terribly good examples of mind control at work: ultra-conservative policies thinly veiled as prophecy, filled with stereotypical denunciations of rock music. Yet throughout these recordings, Prophet and her acolytes belt forth piping, glassoalac vocalizations with an uneasily sustaining vibrato, coming over like a cross between a Southern soubrette and La Monte Young. To the bewitched souls who had hoped for inner peace or transcendence from Cult, these intonations were obviously meant to be received as the apocalyptic "peal of Prophet's power. But but the breakdowns among them didn't reach with their activity being denounced as a "perverted movement of the body".

## SPEAR SAPPHIRE FLOWERS

IGMS PROJECT DI-000 CD

Maping a metaphorical space similar to David Tibet's recurring theme of finding himself "in a foreign town, is a foreign land", on Sapphire Flowers the Polish electroacoustic ensemble Spear dive into the wacky topic of the twilight between life and death. Amidst glowing rays of sound called from prepared cimbassos, tape-recorded bells and resonant drums, Spear specifically insert a series of poetic narratives, treating the voices with a variety of processes (timestretching, downshifting, cathedral reverbs) to keep the enunciation of words enigmatic (the text is supplied in the sleeve notes for handy decoding). Sapphire Flowers' voice is surly sombre and funeral, but unlike the staged presence of the black eyeliner and crushed velvet crowd, it never appears heavy-handed, glibly or biomimetically theatrical. Instead, Spear offer a subtle and pleasant reminder of the impossibly convoluted anagrams and droling adventures conjured by the seemingly forgotten German post-industrial ensemble Coriolanus. □

# Print Run

New books: music and beyond



Man with a movie camera: Jack Smith

## ON JACK SMITH'S FLAMING CREATURES AND OTHER SECRET-FILM OF CINEMAROC

J HOBERMAN

GRANARY BOOKSHOPS ROAD PRK \$29.95

## THE BEAUTIFUL BOOK

JACK SMITH

GRANARY BOOKS/PLASTER FOUNDATION INC

PRK \$39.95

## A PURCHASE IN THE WHITE BOHEMIA: THE COLLECTED POETRY OF PIERO HELICZER

GERARD MALANGA & ANSELME HOLLOW (EDITORS)

GRANARY BOOKS PBK \$19.95

BY EDWIN POUNCEY

The writing and images in these three books resurrect the work of three major underground artists — film maker, writer and artist Jack Smith, poet and publisher Piero Heliczer, and magazine editor Jones Mekas — whose separate and combined vision was directed straight at the pulsating heart of the 60s New York underground movement and is only now being fully recognized. The loss Jack Smith is today mainly remembered for his epic of 'Beautearian cinema', *Flaming Creatures*, a film which, at the time of its release, was praised by the likes of Beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso, together with fellow film makers Andy Warhol, Ron Rice and Film Culture magazine editor Jones Mekas, but branded obscene by the authorities who were scandalised after witnessing the scenes of soft focus, genitalia and blurred transsexual bohemian romping. "It was hot enough to burn up the

screen," was what one cop who raided a screening of Smith's film would later tell the press.

The star of *Flaming Creatures* was originally intended to have been Maran Zazzela. By the time Smith got round to shooting the film, however, Zazzela had met La Monte Young and her commitment to both her partner and the embryonic Theater Of Eternal Music meant that she would hand over the leading role of Delicious Dolores to Sheila Beck, another member of Smith's Warhol-style Choseners society. Zazzela's main contribution to *Flaming Creatures* was to design the titles for the film, but her early influence as one of Smith's photographic models is seen into the celluloid of his creation. Underground film enthusiast and Village Voice film critic J. Hoberman's fascinating, meticulously researched account of the making of *Flaming Creatures* and Smith's other, equally extraordinary Choseners productions is an illuminating piece of cinematic scholarship which reveals yet another side of 60s avant garde New York and ushers in a host of colourful and curious characters who were instrumental in making it happen. Illustrated with stills from the film, and a hitherto unpublished portfolio of revealing photos by Norman Solomon, taken while *Flaming Creatures* was in production, Hoberman's book will remain the last word on Smith's magical masterpiece.

At the same time as he was piecing together his *Flaming Creatures* movie, Smith was also experimenting with still photography as a

medium to bring his Byzantine New York fantasies to life. His tiny studio would be transformed into a scene from the Arabian Nights: he would arrange various members of his coterie to form "plastique" portraits that were both sensual and psychedelic. Smith's main model for these sessions was the young Maran Zazzela who, posing mostly nude or semi-nude, resembles some unattainable siren of mythical legend on the finished contact prints. Smith's other models included Frank Di Giovanni (aka Francis Frascina), Joel Markman, Rene Rivers (aka the notorious Marie Monroe) and Arnold Rockwood, all of whom would appear in *Flaming Creatures*. Although the authorities screamed pornography, Smith's photographic and cinematic studies were reaching towards an intense level of consciousness rather than mere titillation.

In 1962 Smith and Zazzela put together a selection of these prints, titled them *Immortal Photographs* and offered them for publication to Film Culture. The idea was to produce "an abstract visual poem" within the pages of the magazine. When Mekas declared the offer, they approached poet, publisher and film maker Piero Heliczer, who agreed to publish 10 of Smith's original photographs tipped into an artist's book, titled *The Beautiful Book*, with a cover design based on a drawing by Zazzela. 200 copies of the original *Beautiful Book* were handprinted by Heliczer's dead language press (although due to the technical intricacies involved in its production, fewer were probably produced) and it has since attained a legendary status amongst Jack Smith admirers and collectors of 60s

counterculture art. Copies of Heliczer's dead language edition of *The Beautiful Book* rarely come up for sale; a print edition with only eight of the 19 photographs present briefly surfaced, but even this inferior version is now scarce. The latest reproduction is a labour of love that goes back to the original negatives and uses an original copy (from La Monte Young and Maran Zazzela's archive) as its template. The end result is an astoundingly accurate facsimile that has also been printed in an edition of 200 copies. 140 of them are for sale. Despite the hefty price tag (a bargain compared to the thousands of dollars an original would cost) this wondrous glimpse into the secret fantasy world of Jack Smith is irresistible.

*The Beautiful Book*'s publisher, Piero Heliczer, was another intriguing and, until now, relatively unknown member of the New underground. His independently run dead language press was a vehicle for publishing his own poetry, as well as important works by such fellow literary visionaries as Angus MacInnes, Gregory Corso and Anselme Hollow, who co-edited this collection of Heliczer's writings with poet and former factory employee Gerard Malanga. A Purchase In The White Bohemia gathers together all of his dead language press poetry collections, together with his long poem "The Soes Open", which was published in London in 1968. Heliczer's poems are liberally sprinkled with dreamlike images that wantonly abandon all accepted poetic conventions (much to the annoyance of school children who write as Robert Graves) to produce the literary equivalent of a primal blast of feedback from the Velvet Underground. □



The poetic Bill Evans (left) and Thelonious Monk: he meets it, man

## BILL EVANS: THE PIANIST AS AN ARTIST

BY ENRICO PIERANUNZI  
STAMPA ALTE MUSICA. PSK + CD EUR 27,95

### THE THELONIOUS MONK READER

EDITED BY ROB VAN DER BLIEK  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS/HDR 5049  
PK 502 80

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Given the magisterial biography by Peter Pettinger (reviewed in *The Wire* 177), you might wonder whether there's a need for another book on Evans at all. Pettinger was exhaustive on his tragic life – "the longest suicide in history", one of Evans's friends called it – and compelling on the music. But it's pianist and composer Enrico Pieranunzi, quoting Evans's comment "Every man's life is a story", has his own story to tell. In an interview at the end of the book, Pieranunzi explains his fascination with the "creativity/self-destruction combination" that Evans's career embodied. "I wanted to denounce that tragic, absurd duality that identifies being an artist with illness, or even madness," he comments.

Pieranunzi himself has produced some of the most transcendently beautiful jazz piano you're likely to hear. His affecting lyrism is strongly melodic and never descends to the

seachristian influence as influenced by Evans, even a disciple of his, the Italian pianist felt it was a task writing this book. But if Pieranunzi is eloquent on piano, he now shows himself to be equally eloquent in his writing.

Pieranunzi makes clear just how radical Evans's approach was, even though he developed apart from the 60s New Thing of Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor, and preferred a repertoire of show tunes which had become the staple of jazz. "Evans lays down his chords calmly and unhesitatingly and leaves them resounding for a long time. Those sonorous silences create a sense of waiting for something that is never going to happen," Pieranunzi writes. Evans was primarily a harmonic player, but his harmonies form "an inner song" – "No one in the history of jazz had ever used the piano in this way before". No one, in jazz had used the piano to "sing stories", previously the preserve of the voice. Pieranunzi's thoughtful and insightful discussion appears in Italian with an English translation in parallel text. The book comes with a CD, *Evans Remembers*, featuring Pieranunzi's sextet, trio and solo playing. It's a combination of Evans compositions, other songs in Evans's repertoire, and originals by Pieranunzi. The solo recordings match the superb *Con Infinito Voci* which appeared a

couple of years ago on EGEA.

It might seem a great leap from such poetics of the keyboard to the uprooted but totally original eminence grise of modern jazz, composer and pianist Thelonious Monk. But Evans firmly commented on Monk that "This man knows exactly what he is doing in a theoretical way – organised, more than likely, in a personal terminology, but strongly organised nonetheless... Monk approaches the piano... from an 'angle' that, although unprecedented, is just the right 'angle' for him." The *Thelonious Monk Reader* belongs to the fashionably but valuable genre of reception history. Editor Rob Van Der Bliek has assembled a fascinating collection of critical comment, reportage and reminiscence, from the initial puzzled reactions of the 40s to the eulogies after Monk's death in 1962. In Ironic comments on his own music – it's a constant theme here like this incredibly self-sufficient figure seemed to care about its reception – Monk himself did little to ease the bewilderment. When asked the standard question about who influenced him, he would reply that nobody had, or everyone he had heard – or even that he had influenced himself.

There are fine essays here by Ron Blake, Gene Santoro, Gerhard Schuller and Arne Frader. Hodder's compelling article discusses how Monk

tried to break free of jazz's commitment to "unaccompanied melody considered as the only possible form of musical discourse", making him a more radical figure in some ways than John Coltrane. But the outstanding contribution is one written by Scott DeVeaux also for last year's *Black Music Research Journal*. DeVeaux looks at Monk's attitude to the popular song repertoire, and argues that the exaggerated straightforwardness of the pianist's reworkings of standards makes the few unexpected details stand out with special clarity.

Albert Murray brilliantly comments, "There is something of the amply balloon-clad in almost all of Monk's compositions" – Monk as descendant of the downhome honky-tonk pianist who sits alone in the ballroom after the dancers have left, playing around with unusual chord combinations. In fact Monk seemed genuinely baffled by journalists' questions; and his most fluent comments came when talking to fellow musicians. Bassist Bill Crow commented on how it must be his touch that made ordinary intervals sound different. "It can't be any new note," Monk agreed. "When you look at the keyboard, all the notes are there already. But if you mean a note enough, it will sound different. You get to pick the notes you really mean!" Monk meant them all. □

# Print Run

## BANDA: MEXICAN MUSICAL LIFE ACROSS BORDERS

HELENA SIMONETT  
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PRESS HK\$68  
PBK \$19.95

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

In Mexico, the state of Sinaloa has always represented the Wild West. Hammered against the Pacific Ocean by the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range, Sinaloan culture has pursued its own bittersweet course, distinct from the general entertainment favoured by mainstream Mexican society. It was in this region, a century ago, that the brass band music known as banda was developed. European migrants to Mexico brought with them the latest trends in Continental music: in Sinaloa, that meant tubas, valve trombones, woodwinds and brass. But as popular as banda music became regionally, it was generally regarded as a debased form. Mexico's recording

industry began in the early 1930s, but banda records weren't cut until two decades later.

The music was considered lowbrow, enjoyed by drug dealers and perros. Even in subsequent decades, as it evolved beyond its acoustic instrumentation to become tecno-banda — with synths and electric bass replacing the brass players — and its influence spread across the border to expatriate communities in Southern California, banda wasn't deemed worthy of study by local musicologists.

Fortunately, with the recent appearance of *Banda: Mexican Musical Life Across Borders*, Helena Simonett has remedied this gap admirably. A Swiss academic who emigrated to study at UCLA, Simonett first encountered tecno-banda with days of her arrival while attending a Mexican Independence Day celebration in downtown Los Angeles. Her enthusiasm

ultimately led her to investigate the roots of this music in the Tumbes, the regional groups of north western Mexico named for the double-headed drum that provided their rhythmic pulse. (A compilation of the earliest banda recordings, *Musica Tumbes*, has just been issued by the Anonímo label; its liner notes writes by Simonett.)

*Banda* is the work of an academic, opening with her acknowledgement of current schools of ethnomusicological methodology. Simonett defines where she stands on culture as discursive practice. Once the desired air of scholarly rigour has been established, the generally alluring story of a rambunctious dance music that took over a culture is allowed to unfold. Banda ultimately established a foothold in the collective id with dancers in east LA clubs evolving their own steps and dress code to match the music's famous and all-consuming

disposition. Regional chauvinism became significant in the banda phenomenon, as the songs evoked strong memories of home states; the territorial allegiances provoked by the music sparked strong identification with their home culture for Mexican kids living in the US. It also, however, exacerbated tensions between dances that often ended in gunfire. Fins of Jamaican reggae or the rembetika songs of Greece's demimonde will recognise the earmarks of rebel music in Simonett's description of banda and the substance that coalesced around its sound. Like Stephen Davis's *Ragtime Woodness*, *Banda: Mexican Musical Life Across Borders* is the first text devoted to an outlaw form which may well remain the defining work on the subject. Certainly, it's hard to imagine another work capable of the intensive research, high voltage enthusiasm and boundless curiosity informing every page herein. □

## YELLOW MUSIC: MEDIA CULTURE AND COLONIAL MODERNITY IN THE CHINESE JAZZ AGE

ANDREW F JONES  
DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS HK\$49.95/PBK \$17.95

BY HUA HSU

Times such as these remind us that music and politics may make strange bedfellows, but they sure have a hand in keeping their hands off each other. The danger in music is its potential to lead the citizenry astray to implant the 'wrong' idea in innocent minds. History abounds with examples of overzealous leaders inspiring the masses by way of its arts. The question for the authority becomes how to assuage the malcontents and instead nature that is of patriotic virtue or national pride. Whether you're talking about a national anthem or protest music, school songs or federal edict on censorship, the music of the nation is never totally free to wander as it pleases.

Andrew F Jones's essential and exciting study follows the importation of Western technology and music into urban China, the creation of indigenous popular forms and the Chinese government's attempt to regulate the 'types' of sounds circulating at this critical juncture in the nation's history, in particular the amorphous 'yellow music'. Jones captures popular music in China at a crucial political moment when urban artists and intellectuals were flourishing, questions of nationalism were emerging and a new chapter of colonialism was slowly giving way to another. A new nationalism, leftist intellectual movements, World War Two and eventually communism followed shortly thereafter.

Through one never gets an exact sense of what the 'Chinese jazz age' was, Jones roughly commences his study with the May 4th movement of 1919 and ends with the Japanese occupation in the 1930s. The May 4th movement is a key term in Jones's work and it refers to a reform movement of intellectuals, artists and

students concerned with the possibilities of modern progress and new social institutions. Patriotism and this question of 'Chineseness' lingered long in their collective efforts.

Jones's inventive study doesn't aspire toward mastery of music or history. Rather, it suspends one of the most fascinating acts of Chinese modernization — a contested area, but roughly post-World War One to the industrialising 1930s — and reads the politics and culture of the time by way of popular culture. As a result, Yellow Music may seem short of actual music, but it provides a good point through which to parse issues of high/low culture, national/public art, and popular/proletarian forms.

Jones's intellectual goal is to disrupt two key assumptions in the Area Studies school of cross-cultural work — the condescending assumption that China underwent a 'belated modernity' and the outdated belief of discrete, as opposed to symbiotic or dynamic, national 'cultures'. Jones is especially effective in addressing this second concern, pointing out that human history is dotted with multiple 'globalists' that neither originated in the West nor privilege one civilisation over another. He offers some fascinating accounts of black American jazz trumpeter Buck Clayton's 1930s adventures in Shanghai and how his position as a 'colonial subject' in white America transferred to the status of coloniser Shanghai. After getting into fights with white American servicemen who had brought their buddy Jim Crow with them overseas, he was blacklisted by the high-end Western clubs. Demoted to playing local Shanghai standards at Chinese clubs, Clayton, who had yet to make a name for himself in the States, learned Chinese patois and saw how the indigenous fans there responded with the jazz back at home. Jones's conclusion — that one should hear the 'Chinese' in American music — is interesting. It's a pity he didn't go on to explore this nexus of diaspora, colonialism and African-American interaction more.

His chapter on the life of maligned educator and musician Li Jinhai is a compelling reading of how the nation question bore down on one life. Between 1927 and 1935, Li's contribution to the writing, recording and teaching of modern Chinese music was unmatched, and his Bright Moon Song and Dansi Touque produced the bulk of Shanghai's 'entertainment film' in the 1930s and 1940s. As a proponent of aesthetic education for youths, Li also edited one of the most important music journals for children and wrote a series of patriotic children's operas.

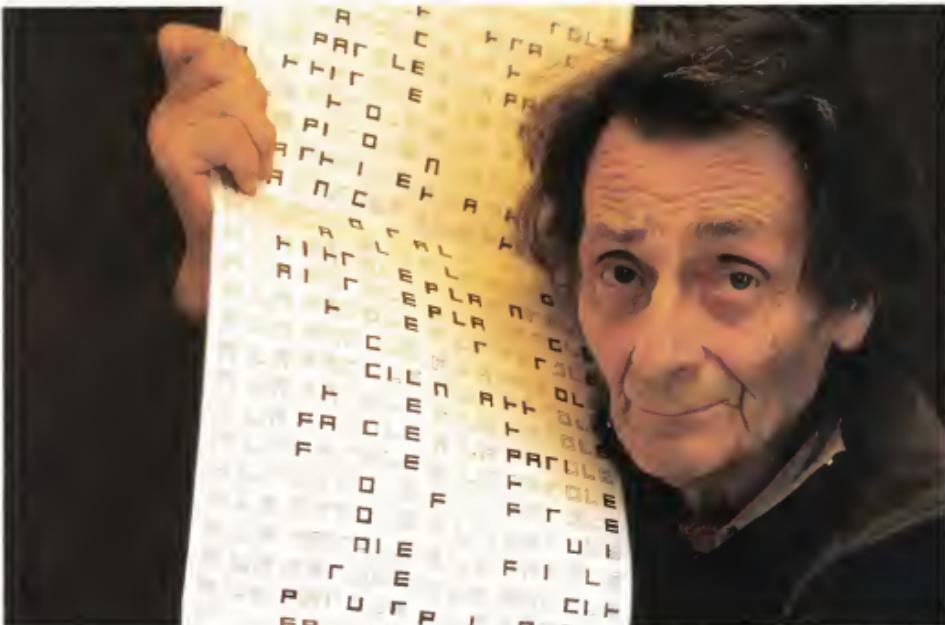
Despite this rich résumé, Li faced criticism from every corner during these politically tumultuous decades of Chinese history when the question of an essential 'Chineseness' underpinned every political, intellectual and artistic movement. He was an ungrateful capitalist to the nationalists, the rural, simplistic and provincial for the literary elite, and far too 'vulgar' and 'pornographic' for the political establishment. Leftist songwriter He Luting complained that if Li indeed represented the Chinese national character, then 'those foreigners who say the Chinese are the most degenerate on earth are entirely correct.'

Jones positions him at the intersection of these competing views and attempts to rehabilitate Li's illustrious career as a way to track the changing codes and identities of modernising China. Where Iachan has installed a binary division between literary elites and popular media culture, Jones sees Li as one who went both ways, an artist rooted in the May 4th tradition of nation-building whose work tapped into the emergent possibilities of new technologies and mass culture inherent in the literature and distribution of recordings. Jones passes the best-known tunes of Li's 'yellow music' — a term Chinese critics used to denote his fusion of Pan Asia pop, native folk and African American jazz — as an icon of fruition from the May 4th movement's goal of creating a uniquely modern,

uniquely Chinese musical idiom.

Since he's more concerned with music as history than musicology, Jones never successfully explores to the lay reader exactly what components of Li's compositions made them 'yellow'. In words of several critics, the bawdy 'yellowess' of the music corresponded to the tendency of the music to spark shows of flesh, but with it the eightballs themselves or something in the sound itself that scared authorities? Jones points out that many such critics were themselves coloured by a notion that Western aesthetics were superior to their native traditions, and it would have been useful to hear more debate about the intrinsic 'obscenity' of one state system as opposed to another. Was the concern in creating school songs or national songs to do with the dissemination of sounds with patriotic phrases or the conscious manipulation of precise, offensive notes and tones?

Through Jones's text is far from perfect, it is a promising new approach to alternative ways of reading and re-assessing the historical body. You only wish he had provided more background on the geographical and political context this music was either singing the praises of or reacting against. When he casually references the May 4th movement or an influential modernist critic like Xu Xun, it is assumed that the reader has a cogent grasp on pre-Communist Chinese history. Also, he doesn't really get across how the marketplace was expanding, what was happening with print culture or what nationalistic sentiments, if any were stirred by the geography of Shanghai and its infamous 'Bund', the commercial district run by European and American governments kept off-limits to native Chinese. However, with as much contemporary work on Asia focusing on macro-movements and immobile corporate cultures, it is truly refreshing to read a history of individuals and record players that reveals so much about the political climate and local culture of China. □



Tower of bubble: Henri Chopin

## LES PORTES OUVERTES OUVERTEMENT HENRI CHOPIN

VÖX EDITIONS PRK + CD FFM40

"It is generally assumed that speech must be consciously understood to cause an effect. Early experiments with subliminal images have shown that this is not true." A characteristic observation from William Burroughs, drawn from *Electronic Revolution*, published in 1971 on Henri Chopin's CD imprint, with original cover design by Brion Gysin. Chopin, like Burroughs but even more radically, has been a tireless researcher into communicative strategies that slip past the conscious grasp. The quest embodied in his sound poetry ("les poètes sonore") since the late 1950s has been fundamentally anti-auditorian and affirmative of creative freedom.

As a young man Chopin experienced Nazi terror firsthand, and abhorrence of brutality has fuelled his work. In *Les Portes Ouvertes* (*Openness*), written in French, he sets out the case for his art as a celebratory crossing of

frontiers, flouting laws and opening up of unfamiliar spaces. Embracing possibilities offered by the microphone, tape recorder and loudspeaker, Chopin has been, in cultural historian Jürgen Zunft's phrase, an "astronaut of interior space", a poet exploring post-Gutenberg galaxies bound within the buccal cavity, esophagus and lungs – epic expanses within the human body.

On "Dans le Silence l'Air 2000" the recently recorded 16 minute piece on the accompanying CD, technological intervention is unobtrusive. The focus falls upon pharyngeal utterance: whispered words, clicks, farts, growls and wheezes, the flow of breath across tongue, teeth and lips. It's a drama staged at a point where conventional ways of making sense spark suggestively against effects realised beyond the limits of language.

The core of the book is an annotated catalogue of Chopin's works, listing 70 pieces with dates, recording techniques used, discussing contexts and personal circumstances, identifying collaborators and including discographical details. As such it's an invaluable guide. Framing

this navigational aide are Chopin's thoughts on the stars he himself has steered by. He affirms his affinity with Burroughs whose "psychedelic delivery" ("la voix suprême") spoke forcibly to him across the threshold of conscious understanding. Gysin also made an impact with his permutations of poems and cut-up experiments. The vital support, however, came from Jean Rotchek, Chopin's "perfetti bringial" wife. He quotes her insight that French, with its grammatical regularities, is a language far less amenable to subversive manoeuvres than the rich English utilised by those Beat writers. The Paris-born poet's investigations have plunged him into another world(s), where words deliquesce or are pulverised into microparticles, where the contours and textures of the human body's inner spaces are disclosed to the attentive ear.

Chopin's tools of help gained internationality. For English electronics expert and instrument maker Hugh Davies, Swedish electroacoustic voyager Steen Hansen, Belgian musician Jacques Beckett and American composers Charlie Morrow and Kenneth Gaburo. A frequently cited intellectual ally is medievalist Paul Zumthor, drawing Midrash-style links between the Medie Ages and the obscurist spaces opened up by a poëtic sonore. Between lies the epoch of the printing press, co-opted by the Academy to fashion stereotypes of convention and ossified forms. Out of that literary epoch Chopin lugs into view a robust antecedent. François Rabelais, author of *Gargantua And Pantagruel*, a rogue fleshly figure launching a cosmic guffaw into the earnest air of the European Renaissance 30 years ago, with Bob Cabilio, Chopin reeked "Vive Rabelais", a rumbustious rhyme to indulgence which (as this volume reminds us) was edited down to one minute by Morgan Fisher in 1980 for inclusion on his *Medieval Anthology*.

Adventurous musicians may find they are now crossing Chopin's steppe. Go to trumpetier Greg Kelley's Website at present and you'll find that his recent listening was based on Björk and Chopin's duopsonia. Now an octogenarian, Chopin has spent half a century venturing out by trawling his own depths. *Les Portes Ouvertes* (*Openness*) is, in effect, the journey's log. □

# Ether Talk

**Dispatches from the digital domain.** This month: Nobukazu Takemura's whimsical electronica is so close to nature, Sony asked him to create a voice for their new canine cyborg. By Tim Haslett



Dog days: Sony's Aibo LM, featuring sound design by Nobukazu Takemura (right)

The latest generation of Aibo - the robotic dog developed by Japanese giant Sony, and aimed squarely at the domestic market - features sound design by Japanese electronica artist Nobukazu Takemura, previously known for his releases on Thrill Jockey and his own Chilidisc imprint. The dogs' puffy ergonomics were designed by Katsuhiro Moshino, an artist and animator whom Takemura has known for more than a decade (Moshino often asked Takemura to spin records during his gallery shows). Moshino introduced Takemura to Suzy, who invited him to create a library of noises, musical and otherwise, to be stored in the dogs' sound chip. To overcome the limitations of only being able to work with single tones, Moshino and Takemura incorporated a sensor into the canine cyborg, allowing it to be used in a similar way to a theremin. Takemura's task was to develop 200 different sounds to be triggered by this remote sensing function. "Usually people don't think consciously of what it's like to be angry or to

cry," comments Takemura about the emotional qualities he tried to instill in the dog's sounds. "Humans can obviously use words to express themselves. To create the sounds of emotions was a difficult task."

Takemura has been creating intimate works of "romantic futurism" since junior high school in Kyoto, when he was "dosing a lot of home recording using guitars and pianos with a tape recorder, here and there. I encountered Hip-Hop, though I have no formal training in either live or electronic instruments." He came to Hip-Hop from an anarcho direction. "I liked the sound of scratching, rather than the music as a genre, and I wanted to be a DJ. It was an underground phenomenon in Kyoto, and though I played Hip-Hop for a time, I became bored with having to please the crowd, to keep them dancing. That's what led me back to doing my own production."

His first venture was with the exploratory group Audio Sports, a collaboration with Yamasato Eye of Beelzebubs and urban ethno-musician Aki

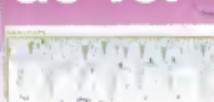
Onda. He also briefly worked with Jim O'Rourke in the mid-90s, an encounter that put him in contact with Chicago's vibrant new music scene, and led to collaborations with Tortoise's Gouli, McCombs and John McEntire, as well as local legend Bandy K Brown, on his classic Meteor EP, which came out on the city's Thrill Jockey label.

Takemura lives in Kyoto because its "urban serenity" and abundance of ancient Japanese architecture keeps him at a remove from the over-technologised environments of Tokyo or Osaka. Now freed from his contract with Warner Japan and running his own label Chilidisc, he is refining his unique style, where whimsical tone and accompanying cartoon artwork he describes as "neon and innocent" - the sound of children humming". His new double CD, *Sign*, has been released in the West by Thrill Jockey. The second disc is a CD-ROM containing a lengthy digital cartoon animation by Katsuhiro Moshino.

"Working on one's own," he remarks, "it becomes necessary to use technology, but I

would very much like to make music using acoustic instruments." On the track "Sign", Takemura's early love of Hip-Hop re-emerges as the low snare, thin as a paper cut, rubs against sharpened 809 kickdrums reminiscent of Marie Marli's mid-80s productions. Above the dawdling drum machine one hears the tranquil sound of cicadas or crickets as spring-like synth chords play a gentle major key. There are more dimensions to Takemura's deceptively complex music. Although most of his releases to date have expressed a kind of revenge of the pastore, in response to urban anomie and the reach of capital, he is not afraid to embrace horserider modes. At a live performance in New York three years ago, he finished the set with an epic afterwave massacre ("in my stock of recordings," he explains, "I have a lot of noiser pieces. I'm planning to release this stuff on Chilidisc, and hopefully Thrill Jockey, under the name *Assassin*..."). Translations by Hashim Sign is out now on Chilidisc.

## Go To:



Nick Carr's **Opprobrium** (zine ([www.info.net.nz/oppriburn](http://www.info.net.nz/oppriburn)) has a new issue online. Founded as a print publication in 1995, the site has now been replaced by a Webzine run from Carr's new home in London, and contains all past issues of Opprobrium. Goodies such as a 1990 Fushitsusho interview (Intrius Keiji Hano, unfortunately), the current interview with guitar god Joe Morris, and hundreds of in-depth reviews of improvised and experimental music, makes this an invaluable resource. Have a patter on hand, though, as the text-heavy pages will tire your eyes.

Mike Watt's **Hooptage** ([www.hooptago.com](http://www.hooptago.com)) is a good place to track the many projects of the prolific ex-Minuteman and Firehouse bassist. Although not exactly at the cutting edge of Web design, Hooptage lists Watt's interests and

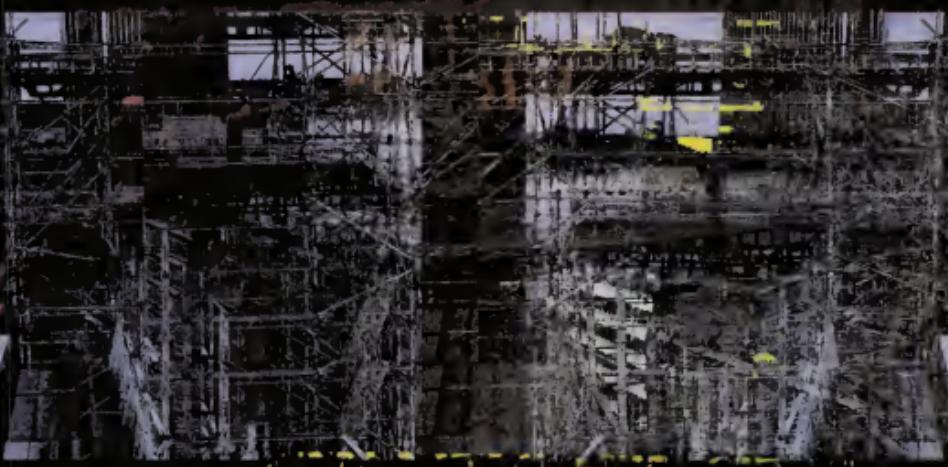
achievements, past and future, lyrics, discogs and film clips, photos of his many bass guitars, men a Quasimodo tour of Watt's 'beat', his 1990 Ford Econoline E-250 van. There's also a good, active discussion group linked to the Hooptage for serious minutemen (and women).

At **Nanopops** ([www.nanopops.com](http://www.nanopops.com)), small pixelpeople amazons, a design phenomenon spread around the Web by design hub **K10K** ([www.k10k.de](http://www.k10k.de)) - perform mini-hapsines of groups such as Sonic Youth, Kiss, The Beach Boys, etc., in case you find yourself online with a few moments to kill. The two primo videos in the "folly" section are also fun: check the Michael Jackson moonwalk and the computer-pool basketball. The original **Fleeppeople** are at [fleeglyin.com](http://fleeglyin.com), whose "Minipops" section

includes hundreds of miniature musicians although sadly not in motion.

Casten Nicolai's **Snownoise** ([www.snownoise.com](http://www.snownoise.com)) is an altogether more serious affair. The online project, designed in collaboration with designers Animal Logic, coincided with his expo of the same name held at The Art Gallery of New South Wales last autumn. Entering the site, you are greeted with the minimal pulsing and noise typical of his label, Raster Noton. A balance between the pithetic qualities of a snowflake and its scientific side, you'll find links to various research labs, a snow crystal diagram, a history of others who have studied snowflakes (starting with astronomer Johannes Kepler in 1611), and occasionally accompanied by (know) white noise.

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# On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts,  
clubs in the flesh



## AVANTO FESTIVAL

### HELSINKI KIASMA/GLORIA FINLAND

BY ROB YOUNG

Striated by the horizontal lines of a TV tube, a dungeoned German woman stands in a bare room; every few seconds the film cuts sharply and she is seen in mirror image. A hissing, humming soundtrack rises and falls according the closeness or distance of the lens. Like so much DIY video art, past and present, Vaile Export's 1974 experimental *Raum Seven Und Raum Henni* is more interesting as a conceptual notion than in the watching. Screened as part of the Signal To Noise Ratio film strand of this year's Avanto Festival in Helsinki, the rarely seen sequence recalled a very different era: one where attention spans must have been so much more enduring, before the DJ and the sampler, before the popular computer interface was invented, and when electronic sound still thrived with new electricity rather than the micromanaged circuitry of Apple or Microsoft. Avanto's programme captured something of this dichotomy in 2001, seesawing quite squarely between some of the most twisted electronics currently being imagined, and some of the most sanguine progressive rock being thumped out everywhere.

In a Helsinki that was suddenly covered in a drifting snowfall from day one, it was the blood rush of Circle Rains and Otono Yoshida that won the day over more clinical electronics. Taisto rock quintet Circle – a Finnish institution, undeservedly neglected in Western Europe – are an awesome live experience. At first, their Magna-que wail of guitar force and Wagnerian abstract postures threatens just another troupe of rugged Scandinavian Prog hooligans. But as their massive crashing motor rhythms really kick in after a couple of numbers, and they begin to lose themselves in the gush of their own kundun, their rhythmic engines kick in firebreath same fuel that drove the late, great Loop, the pro-Mem group led by Robert Hampson. (One track was built around a precise facsimile of the rift free

*Clockwise from top left: Keckhut, Farmers, Massel, Circle*

Loop's "This Is When You Eat"). Faust, with whom Circle played a high profile concert here in 2000, are another recognisable referent. But the wailing vocal intricacies from the Fender Rhodes player seemed superfluous to requirements.

In the same vein, the Japanese Ruins duo (Tetsuya Yoshida & Hisashi Suzuki) are as spartanly form, almost absurdly tight, rehanced, even barking their "think you're in perfect sync." Their taut, twisted chunq/base compositions have arrived at a Baroque – no, call it Marimant – level of complexity, so intricate and full of switchblades and sine changes. If Circle recalled Loop, Ruins recalled obscure 80s Beehiveby Ron Johnson acts like Big Flans or The Mackenzies. A small band of dedicated headbanging fans held up placards with scribbled requests for the unique symbols that are their song titles. "We already played that one," Sesaki answers one request, to general merriment.

As a New Media and Arts festival, Avanto aims to present a wide mix of current practices, housed within walking distance of the Kiasma Centre, including Kiasma's cinema and gallery, the Glsea club, and the Muu Gallery, where Mikko Mäkinen's Pernicound exhibition was set up (a feedback system that was supposed to generate sound and visual activity from autostraining internet traffic, but which seemed queerer than a private backalley in the Orkneys). Väinöns aruntas Farmers Manual were handed a room in the Ateli, a building across the street from Kiasma with windowspanes overlooking Helsinki's main street, creating an eye changing backdrop of city life. The occasion I dropped in, the ambience was *Insomniac sleepover*: a few hangers-on helping themselves to coffee and breakfast, unmade beds strewn over the floor, and the hollow-eyed Farmers themselves apparently cracking out an improvisation for three laptops and a video projector. Entered around the space were Buckminsterfulous, stopan workshopers on the subject of mapping an and network activity into a domestic context.

More intimate events occurred in Kiasma's auditorium, which was given over to more experimental electronics. Robert Hampson and

Jenek Schaefer's Comee duo are tailor-made for the density of the compact disc, but their head-down, microscopic improvisation, which reached an exquisite peak when Hampson mixed in a faint location recording of indistinct bells and shin' ones, fell overing. St Petersburg's Alexei Bossov's crackly, guitarish info-blasts are a more raucously proposition, finely complemented by Anssi Härmäläinen's projected slide sequence of garages and outbuildings in Moscow. Bossov's coded transmissions never fall back on Dark Ambient cliché, instead resembling the *Nunus Stations* recordings issued by Ildar Raspa is slowly revealing a hitherto untapped source of fascinating electronica seldom heard outside its borders: prepare for increased noise intercepts over the coming year.

The festival revolved around the Japanese axis of Sachiko M, Otono Yoshida and Toshimura Nakamura, who have now evolved, it seems, into a continuous touring party as Finken. M's and Nakamura's solo sets with sinewaves and no input mixing desk are no longer novelties, and there's something about hearing this music at comfort level in a seated environment that seems to tarnish the music's silverpoint sheen. Perhaps it needs a Swans-level playback volume, or a tighter Zorn/Hermann Theatre intimacy – something, at least, to avoid too much despatch.

In sonics of such fine and almost imperceptible alterations and transmutations, over an extended duration, played with no visible movement in the performance, intentions are extremely hard to fathom. A blue lay in Tokyo Rose, a now, finely paced and introspective 'documentary' by Swedes Kristian Pen, Jes Raed and Johan Söderqvist, plus soundtrack by Zbigniew Karkowski, and screened sweat times during Avanto. This was a journey through some of that city's less travelled roads, and the Japanese imagination, including interviews with female noise musician Mayuko Hisa, photographer Nobuyoshi Araki, and sundry local journalists, commentators, observers and characters, teetering over the chasm between documentary and inventive fiction with the gravitas of Patrick Keiller's *Robinson In Space*.

The recurring theme: a desire to reconnect with spirits, ancestors, as well as finding space to meditate on one's individual and unique life force. A trip to a peripherally desolate stretch of woodland just outside the capital reveals a place where walruses are enmeshed in a smothering landscape that beckons them to a black doom, the affinity of the Japanese with robotics, and the inability to see cyborg technology as particularly inhuman, is also explored. Perhaps it's here where the Flaminet aesthetic is revisited, since M and Nakamura insist that their subwaves have no connection with emotion or thought – purely intermusical exercises. Well, fine, but on this triple header it was Otono's rumbustious rearrangement of his tabletopology that really woke everyone up: it's nothing we haven't seen from Yoshida before – shimmering drone captured on turntables, culminating at the last minute by his gleeful destructive tendencies. He looks like a bored salarman flipping out at his desk as he extends an improvisation in feedback by chucking crockery about, fiddles with a pencil holder and pen on a revolving turntable, and lets it all with the whiz of a celloless drill. It is a issue which carries the weight of human input, and is welcome for that.

An enduring image from the festival was provided by Kaku Puulu, who goes by the alias of Keuluf (meaning Lung). Puulu cuts a lard, leering figure framed by a lukeus self made costume that incorporates a floppy lamp hanging over his alloweaged head, a mic hanging in front of his mouth like Dylan's harmonica, and various props. To the no-natives speaker it's a ludicrous spectacle, part graft shambles, part Glasto 73 presden. But the crowd's surge to his feet tells a different story: apparently he's a noted figure who sings unique and oddly phrased nonsense against technology, lives in a remote forest land of isolation and agitates against corporate digital progress in all forms (except for the drum computer he reset between each song). Despite a gaping language barrier and continued theatres, Keuluf's woodland agit-guignol proved Avanto's most enduring affirmation of difference. □

# On Location

## HUDDERSFIELD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL HUDDERSFIELD VARIOUS VENUES

BY ANDY HAMILTON

It's been 20 years since the death of Cornelius Cardew in a hit and run accident, and this year's Huddersfield Festival hosted a major retrospective of his work, featuring contemporaries as well as fans and disciples from younger generations. The highlight was a realisation of *The Great Learning* (1968-70), Paragraph Six, which seemed to feature Huddersfield University music students as well as older enthusiasts. The score is executed by each performer independently, and when they have exhausted the instructions they leave – thus, towards the end the effect was like a performance art version of Haydn's Farewell Symphony. The original was chamber-like, a tribute to Christian Wolff, but with this larger grouping, including many instrumentalists, and others rustling paper, making animal noises, tapping feet and so on, the effect was less spare, more involving.

After the performance, composer Chris Fox chaired a vigorous debate between Howard Skempton, John Tilbury and Antón Lukácszová-Skempton and Tilbury, both contemporaries of Cardew, and old sparring partners – Tilbury probably the living embodiment of the Cardew aesthetic. Skempton commented that the original performances of *The Great Learning* were "less disciplined, we got less advice – a lot of the time we were lost". Tilbury saw this as a virtue; for Cardew, he said, "every honest

utterance makes sense", and he would never criticise a sincere performer. It's unlikely, then, that he would have criticised the previous evening's performance in St Paul's Hall of Schostakone Competitions (1968), except perhaps for being too hi-tech, with video and lighting effects which made the performance appear go-flood. The first half of the concert had featured Cardew pieces from the early 60s, with precise notational scores, performed by the array of improviser talent which makes up Apartment House, including John Teubert, Edita Průšová, Rhodri Davies and Howard Skempton, directed by Antón Lukácszová-Skempton, director of *Meter*'s excellent repeat disc of solo cello music by Chris Fox, reviewed *The Wire* 214.

He kept on cutting out his dynamics, his dazzling dianomos, the mines of which he knew to perfection". Skempton's description of Webern applies also to contemporary Hungarian master György Kurtág, another composer featured at this year's festival. Kurtág shares Webern's minimalistism – though it might be better described as an obsession with the fragment – and slow production. In the 15 years after his opus one, the first string quartet from 1959, he composed just eight works, totalling less than 90 minutes of music. What as opus 1, though. Kurtág described it blithely as "An insect sees the light. The flagolet chord [joining harmonics, at the end] symbolises the ray of light, and there is all this junk in between" The music can't junk of course. Kurtág haughtily writes an insatiable note in his life in the Town Hall, which turned out to be a surprisingly good venue for chamber music. The Arditti String Quartet reprised the driving intensity of their *Avalon* recording, following it with what is usually regarded as Quartet No 3, "Officium bre-

in memoriam Andrzej Szwalinsky" (1988-89). The conclusion was the premiere of a collaboration between Kurtág Sr and Jr, Zweigepflockt, with György Jr on live electronics. Where the electronics were restrained and spare in the style of the older composer they fitted well, although it still felt like a dithorn.

In his later career, Kurtág has sped up, meeting all possible Blairstre production targets for compositions. In the 70s he began compiling the piano pieces that make up *Atavist*. This he has since performed as a double act with his wife Márta, and it made for a beautiful late-evening Town Hall concert. The pieces show a range of moods from the delicate, ethereal *Hommage à Christian Wolff* to the violent *Play With Overseas Perpetuum Mobile* builds to a climax of glossandi that slowly dies away, while *Hommage à Halmásyi Mindy* has an uncanny acoustic clavichord effect. Interspersed among them were several of Kurtág's elegant and moving Bach transcriptions. The shared intimacy of Kurtág and Márta was very moving, the humour of the pieces apparent in a way a recording couldn't show, especially in *Beating, Fighting*, a husband and wife spat, and *Funny Bones*.

The Town Hall was also the venue for performances of two pieces showing a post-Stekhousean concern with overcoming stereo concert listening. The spectacular *Nova Mob* by young German talent Olga Neuwirth was performed by Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart. The 13-minute piece used cut-out tests from William Burroughs's *Nova Express*, which it cut up further through a montage of recordings of Pidgeon English and so-so film soundtracks. The singers were placed around the auditorium, each also

controlling a boombox, usually associated with a different kind of music. In a later concert by the excellent Kammertrio Wien, Kurtág's "Quasi una Fantasia" – placed instrumentalists rather than singers on the balconies, without boomboxes. Its clarity and economy put other pieces, including Newirth's perhaps less compelling *Holocombo*, into perspective.

But the highlight of the festival was Heiner Goebbels's wonderful, enchanting *Hausriegel*, performed at the Lawrence Batley Theatre. You might know Goebbels from last year's *Surreal Cities* on ECM, and the composer of radio-sound art in Germany, but in a talk afterwards the composer described himself modestly as a compiler of the musical outtakes from *The Beach Boys' Pet Sounds* album set alongside Japanese folk music. The three a/cappella/sing/guitar/dancers – Marie Goyette, Sophie Englehardt and Yuriko Tanaka – recited texts from Gertrude Stein's *The Making Of Americans*, in a well-enunciaded and almost patronising delivery. Goebbels is a man of the theatre as much as a composer, and music and words were unified in a delightfully absurdist, make-believe world of play, swing as much to levity as any contemporary American drama. Balloons and beds descended from the ceiling, one of the players took an imaginary shoe-box dig for a walk, and a cardboard cutout bus 'drove' by a nonchalent gum-chewing driver appeared on stage to take the three players on a journey. A dinner tone was set for the closing scene, yet a single garish light bulb, but as for the message I wouldn't care to guess – maybe there wasn't one. Lighting and sets were perfect. Unforgettable, but sadly there was only one performance. You had to be there. □

## URI CAINE TRIO LONDON VORTEX

BY TOM PERCHARD

With its dark walls and bare floorboards, blackouts and fairy lights, North London's Vortex is certainly a bit yuppie-gone-bad, new Hackney, but the club's too small and too uncomfortable for much lounge life posing. An evening at the club usually involves lipping over feet and at least one argument over chairs – on this occasion, mine was with a BBC sound man who had noticed the extreme importance by collecting a couple of seats for his friend packet. Cataplectic the place may be, but that sort of intimacy can help generate superb, sometimes epiphany performances.

The club's existence is usually under threat for one reason or another. This time, though, the

reprieve is very late in coming: to save the club, £200,000 must be raised by March. The Vortex Jazz Foundation (details at [www.patreon.com/vortex\\_jazz](http://www.patreon.com/vortex_jazz)) has been set up to raise the money necessary to win an entertainment licence and to develop the building into a dedicated centre for performance, rehearsal and music education. The patron is Charlie Watts and, whom, music lover Elton John has also promised to chip in.

Uri Caine and drummer Ben Perroway first visited the Vortex with Dave Douglas's group three or four years ago. Since then, Caine has attracted attention with projects based on the music of Martinu, Wagner, Schubert and JS Bach – the last of which, *The Goldberg Variations*, is especially suited to treatment and eclecticism in style. Fairly enough, the pianist's treatment of the classical canon is far more inventive than is

his approach to jazz: Caine may not be afraid to cast Wagner down to size, but he sounds like he practices with a banjo bust of Herbie Hancock on top of the piano.

The pianist's touch and feel is generally relaxed, coltishly slow, although he's sometimes given to hammering out octaves like McCoy Tyner. The Hancock influence always shows though, though at the Vortex, Caine was happiest on songs like "Reverie" and "One Finger Snap", where he unashamedly drew on the lucky numbers of Hancock's melodic and harmonic vocabulary, all sharp fives and threes and dominant sevenths. Caine's posture was equally studious and inquisitive, his right hand often content to float and think while his left slatted at chords. Along with the pianist, bassist Drew Gress and Perroway made an affable group of characters, a playground trio of

prizewinner, nerd and buzer. Gress was unassuming, his playing easily led by the likable but none too subtle Perroway.

Playing songs like "Raining Leaves", "Round Midnight" and "On Gross Bathon Street", the three worked well, but predictably. As if in apology for their haggard repose, Caine and Gress played hide the standard, approaching overfamiliar chord progressions as elliptically as possible, sometimes only alluding to original melodies. But there was very little real structural interplay here, hardly any questing or of predetermined roles or musical direction. Sometimes the trio would lurch into self-conscious moments of chaos, but these were simple tension-building devices at harmonic turning points rather than spontaneous free improvisations. And they were doing that before Haydn, as Caine well knows. □

Top: Heisei Gorobetsu's *Nishihengaku* staged at Huddersfield Festival. Bottom left to right: Uri Caine at the Vortex; Thalia Zedek at the Monarch

## THALIA ZEDEK LONDON MONARCH UK

BY LOUISE GRAY

The Monarch — a blackened cube that belongs at the end of the universe — is perhaps one of the most unpleasant venues in London. Yet this small, smoke-filled room above a Camden Town pub is perversely suitable for Thalia Zedek's music. Summon up a Motown moment: those are dark songs about split hearts flung out against black walls. If there was any other colour in the gloom present, it would be a liquid internal red.

Though Zedek's blackness has its own luminosity, it's not quite in the same tonality as Neil Cave's, a land where the black sun never sets. It's a difference of strategy: Zedek's songs write between honesty and a full-on sonic attack

that seizes you in a pricer movement. The Boston-based singer honed the tactic leading blues-based alt rockers such as Come, U2 and Live Skull. Now, with her debut solo album, *Been Here And Gone* (Matador), picking up clusters of people heart awards for those wounded in the service of love, the larynx-ripping singer is poised for the larger recognition that's long been her due.

It's a no-nonsense gig (though a bunch of plastic flowers jostle between two beer crates may offer a momentary comment on the hearts and flowers school of romantic love), and all the stronger for it. Clambering onto the stage with former Come colleague and drummer Daniel Coughlin and wobla player David M. Darby of The Willard Green Conspiracy, a panda-eyed Zedek looks like she's just gone 15 rounds in the ring, but then this is the last day of a small European

headlining tour, which followed recent dates with Wil Oldham. Even so, she plugs in and immediately lets rip. "Back To School" smirks with a confronterial weariness that's echoed in the way that Zedek's rhythm guitar locks in against drums and viola. Yoko Murata's keyboards provide a airy presence, as does some occasional mandolin work from the WGC's Simon Alpin, but the Zedek group's dynamic is very much that of the trio.

Possibly the only other good thing that could be said about tonight's venue is its size, tiny, meaning that there's nowhere to hide once Zedek gets into her stride. The sound just slices through you, physically manifesting the song's latent content. On "Strong," her sudden bass notes weigh anchor while Darby's viola shudders for release. The tension — lyrics, delivery, context — is brilliantly effective,

and tautness informs the gig's best moments: "Excommunications (Everybody Knows)" and a superb version of "Sanctified Else" pulls all elements together into a ferocious focus, with Zedek herself as the still eye of the storm.

There's space for frenetic activity here, but compared with Come and her previous group, the new material takes its time. The pace is slower, the musical structures more exalted and, though Zedek's magnificently run of a voice exudes the same gulf sensuality, the attack is subtler, even persuasive. So much so that, having heard Leonard Cohen's "Dance Me To The End Of Love" given a manic, spooling thrashing, it's kind hard to ever imagine the Zen monk charting it for his own again. That's the power of Zedek after her, though simply don't stay the same and that's what life — and love's — about. □

# On Location



Going for broke: Chris Degere (left); Christopher Whales takes no chances (centre); Joshua Torres (right)

## SIX STRING OBJECT: DIGITAL GUITAR MICROFESTIVAL SAN FRANCISCO CAFE DU NORD USA

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

All the kids are doing it: laptop computers running routine synthesis environments such as MAX/MSP and SuperCollider are part of the furniture. In the Bay Area environs this is especially true: Oakland's Mills College hosts laptop jams and in San Francisco, a city where zoning ordinances seemingly mandate a DJ supply shop for every commercial block, state-of-the-art programming and beatmatched DJ sets have begun to develop in a logical way.

Exploring the relationships between club culture, music software and the guitar's role as interlocutor, Secret Exorcist's Kevin McDowell recently hosted the premier edition of Six String Object, a digital guitar microfestival held over two consecutive nights. Though the performers were selected on the basis of their involvement with "digitally processed and prepared guitars," the six stringed objects in question, when not physically absent, took a backseat to the black plastic displays whose Apple logos glowed in the Stygian darkness of Cafe du Nord's subterranean performance space.

Billed as Joshua Torres, Jeffe Carita-Ledesma

from local out-rockers Tarentel fixed his insatiable gaze on the Powerbook and conjured downward-swooping glissandi punctuating numerous layers of drones and pulsing bass harmonics. Random sweeps matched with rhythmic pulses yielded a sonic maelstrom taken over by aggressive pink noise textures. Sophisticated polyrhythms announced the chord clusters and other tonal conveniences that coopted in

towards the end of Torres/Carita-Ledesma's set.

Emulate reading what Chris Degere matched his gaze to the varied dynamics of his music with the help of a homebrewed interface enabling the use of a Palm Pilot as a MIDI x/y surface. It has been a long road from the full-arm sweep of the late Clara Rockmore's thematic playing to Degere's ornate permianism, yet both technologies add grittiness to what otherwise might simply be a "push to play" experience. The PDA tested the contours of filter modulation and input streams of note events. Degere then picked up a bass guitar to accompany his mesh of sequences. In his set, throughout the festival, the zedgest grinch quotient was met and then some.

The first evening closed with a site-specific audio installation assembled and triggered by festival organiser McDowell. He then burned three CD-Rs of promised recordings culled from several Tarentel performances. These were played

simultaneously as the club's mirror ball lit up, tossing disc's number one lighting cliché into the postmodern blender. The three discs synchronized to stroking effects at points, the open chord swing and rapofo samples meeting as if by mutual agreement. Bowing strings met creaky drones in McDowell's rethinking of Tarentel's sound.

Guitars -- the actual instruments as played for their own sake -- made a stronger showing on the second night. Daron Key, guitarist with Control R Workshop, stood apart from the crowd by eschewing laptop technology completely. The diffident performer preferred to modify the timbre of his six strings by mechanical and electric means. Building cycling melodies with rapid left-tapping, Key resorted to affixing objects to the stage (lengthy springs creating their own unique reverbs), bowing the Fender Mustang and then breaking the guitar's output with ring modulator treatments and other pedal effects.

Christopher Whales positioned himself and his electric bass behind both a Powerbook and a MIDI command station. Just shy of transforming into a Rabe Goldberg mechanism, Whales addressed all three implements with the adroitness of a medieval harpist; the processed fragments of stochastic picking came to resemble Steve Reich's work with the Pulse Gate and evoked the cyclical aura of Four Digits. The festival's finale paired musician Chara

Giovando with video artist/Orthogonal Musique co-runner Sue Costabile, under the collective moniker Hot Laser. Seated at centre stage, Costabile projected video images of vintage album art, their imagery (the smiling wolf from *Steppenwolf Live!*) echoed and smeared via laptop applications, with Costabile drawing onto the results. Her visuals shined little more than kachap with Giovando's distortion of a John Bonham drum loop, finally allowing the track through. Giovando swayed dreamily and played air guitar. This faint showmanship stood in bold relief against the desktop commandments that preceded Hot Laser, but it wasn't enough to erase the taint of self-indulgence from their set. Nor was Giovando's sluggish button-pushing on a toy guitar with The 70s references, both musical and visual, made a rod in the direction of a critique of male hegemony in arena rock. But then, maybe those old LP covers just look cooler on the big screen. Doing in the intervals, WIRE contributor Philip Sherburne spun a programmatic ambience from discs featuring manipulated guitar sounds. Among others, he won the turned fog that was My Bloody Valentine's signature into the reversed guitar of a Stone Roses track. Even the canned music for Six String Object showed more vitality than the city's established avant music festivals have shown in recent years. □



Cargo cells: Rambin (top) and Manitoba at December's Leaf showcase

## MANITOBA + EARDRUM + GORODISCH

LONDON CARGO  
UK

BY JOHN MULVEY

Label rights can be a haphazard business, especially when the company strives to present a shared aesthetic but not a homogeneity. London's Leaf imprint have been best known of late for nurturing a rather wistful, jazz and folk-tinged strand of electronica, typified by Susumu Yokota's outstanding series of albums. What's more, a long knock with Kenny Hedges (Four Tet, Fridge) has seen a succession of inquiries drawn to the label whose influences may be eclectic, but who have a certain sensitivity and melodic lightness that could loosely be termed pastoral.

That's certainly evident in tonight's openers, Ondesintensity, the project of guitarist/keyboardist

Stephen Cracinel. Geredash are a deprocessed reiteration of the Leaf idea. If the likes of Yokota digitally reconstruct acoustic music, Cracinel seems to have absorbed their lessons, then pressed to play it out using a more traditional group format. To that end, it's often hard to determine what is simplified and what is being played by the assembled quintet. At their best, on the willowy reprise of "Setting Sail", Gorodisch appealingly blur the distinctions between ancient and modern techniques. But technical difficulties prey on their facility and, when the drops are spent, they have a tendency to slip into a pleasant but uninteresting jazz formula, characterised by Duncan Mackay's Miles-ish treated trumpet.

Eardrum, meanwhile, represent the evening's impressive incongruities. A vague connection with the cosmic tastes of their Leaf comrades

(Hedges' DJ set includes Sun Ra alongside Dylan and Pharoah Sanders) can be seen in the fiery flumes of saxophonist Jason Yarde. But the essence of Richard Olafunde Baker and Lou Cooperrig's music is their use of massed African and Western percussion with FX to produce industrial jazz. On record, Eardrum can sound rather austere and academic, an experiment in polyrhythms that's a little dead of funk. Live, however, there's less self-consciously and much more fluidity, reminiscent of both 23 Skidoo and Fela Kuti's Africa '70.

Eardrum are still packing their arsenal away when Manitoba — London-based Canadian Dan Smith — begins his set. If Smith's debut album from last spring, *Start Breaking My Heart*, attractively conformed to stereotype with its fused acoustics and piano, tonight sees the beats in ascendence. For half an hour, he uses

his laptop, mixer and deck to generate infinitesimally detailed, graceful yet hyperactive IDM. Like KdDB's recent shows, it feels as if the barrier between DJing and live performance is now indistinguishable, as Smith drops a snob-baiting snitch of Daniel Bedagheld's "Gotta Get Illru This" amongst his own material. Unlike the kid, though, he plays a less combustible game; there's the sense that Smith's compacting a tremendous amount of abstract information into melodic and accessible songforms. At the end of his unexpected set, he mixes in Big Le's "Put It On", refocusing his ghetto sentiments into a becalmed setting reminiscent of Four Tet's folk version of Joy Division's "Hey Pal". As proof that you can be dished by the diversity of your tastes rather than the narrowness, it makes for a lasting tribute to the gentle ambience of Leaf. □

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# Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.

Send info to *The Wire*, 2nd Floor East, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, UK

Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, [listings@thewire.co.uk](mailto:listings@thewire.co.uk)

Compiled by Phil England



Peter Tosh: Return of the Living Dead in Turkey (see International Festivals)

## UK Festivals

RPH MOJO 100

LONDON

Celebration of the 100th issue of British magazine Mojo in a festo featuring four live appearances by legendary Beach Boys Brian Wilson, performing a selection of greatest hits and arrangements from Pet Sounds, backed by a ten piece group (Royal Festival Hall, 27 January, 7.30pm). Continuing the wacky beach party, there's also a first time screening of Morgan Neville's documentary film *Brain Wilson: A Beach Boy's Tale*, mixing home movies, concert footage and interview material (National Film Theatre, 31, 8.40pm). The other nights include another unprecedented UK appearance, this time by French chanteuse Brigitte Fontaine, as special guest of Sondre (Royal Festival Hall, 1 February, 8pm); lounge heads The High Llamas, backed by a 14 piece orchestra, and supported by Sirens (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 2pm); glockenist and Zootie Zoot collaborator Marc Ribot strums a selector from his recent album *Saints* (Purcell Room, 3pm); and troubadour Elliott Smith follows up last year's Metkown appearance with a 15 piece orchestra (Royal Festival Hall, 6pm). South Bank Centre, 27 January-6 February, times/prices vary, 020 7960 4242, [www.sbc.org.uk](http://www.sbc.org.uk)

ROLL SWINDELL and Derek Jarman's Jubilee, along with a shoving of Iara Lee's history of electronic music and Techno, Modulations, touring various venues, 16-19 January

[infohdmuzik.com](http://infohdmuzik.com)

### SONS D'HIVER

FRANCE

Annual New Music series in and around Paris, whose line-up includes György Kurtág solo, The Chacobones 2002, Archie Shepp New Quartet, a ten piece group featuring Harald Oskar, Billy Bang & William Parker, Louis Sclavis duo and quartet, Lee Perry & Mad Professor Sound System, Yes Robert Quintet, Jansalideen Tacuma. Paris various venues, 17 January-16 February, 03 33 1 4687 3131, [www.sondhiver.org](http://www.sondhiver.org)

10'X 10' and comprises an interlocking jigsaw of musical buttons that can be switched on and off by the viewer, who effectively brings in and out different segments of a 22 minute musical composition that plays continuously. The work is on show in London Royal Festival Hall February 19-20 January-2 February (admission free) and right January 2 February 7.45pm. Elizabeth Hall, 2 February 7.45pm. £15, £12.50, 020 7960 4242, [www.rfb.org.uk](http://www.rfb.org.uk)

### MERZ NITE

UK

A celebration of the Oasis spirit of Kurt Schwitters organised by Wire writer Ben Watson. Among the art-artists boasting憋 in a 60-minute collective improvisation (with three minute cameo by each artist) are extended musicians Lot Cabbil, Mick Beck, Simon Fell, Rhodri Davies, Gail Brand, Pat Thomas, Dave Ross (Kerry Prosser Team), and out-of-the-box spoken word and visual artists Bob Cobbing, Mary Perry (Alternative TV), Uli Freer John Plant, Cut To Lunch and Tom Raworth. Not forgetting sepukungan dancer Jennifer Pike, daphonist Shu Colton and the enveloped bricks of Marie-Astrophe Butler. London Victoria & Albert Museum, 25 January, 8pm, free, 020 7388 6679

### EVAN PARKER'S DARE OF THE HOG

UK

The improvising sax guru ushers in the New Year with an evening of free associating music and ever changing combinations of musicians. Evan is joined by Ethan Decan and Lot Cabbil on saxophones, Steve Beresford and Verena Weston on piano and John Edwards and Maris Sanders on bass and drums respectively. London Venue, 1 January, 6.30-11.30pm, £10/£7, 020 7254 6516

### TV JAZZ

UK

Series of showings of archive TV jazz performances largely drawn from the BBC TV Jazz 625 show, includes Coleman Hawkins, Oscar Peterson & Webster (1 and 13 January), Duke Ellington: Ellington in Europe (9 and 12),

Thelonious Monk & Chu Berry (8 and 18), Grava Brubeck & Woody Herman (18), Billie Holiday and Ghislé Carrill on Chelsea At Nine, Sarah Vaughan with the Kirk Stutter Trio and the Count Basie Orchestra, Ella Fitzgerald with the Oscar Peterson Trio & the Ray Ellington Quartet (31), London National Film Theatre, 020 7928 3232, [www.bfi.org.uk/](http://www.bfi.org.uk/)

## On Stage

### LA BOTTEINE SOURIANTE

French-Canadian Ward Music outfit. London Ocean, 29 January, 7pm, £15 advance, 020 7314 2800

### JULIE DOIRON + MANISHEVITZ + SCOUT NIBLETT

Direct minimalist pop from Grifters associate Oren, London The Arts Cafe, 26 January, 8pm, £5, 020 7247 5681

### GREN MARSHALL

Tabs and electronics whilst presents An Introduction to the Story of Spooky Sponda. London Wapping Hydraulic Power Station, 10-11, 14-15 and 17 January, 2020 7880 2080

### ROBERT MITCHELL'S PANACEA

Global jazz fusion from Henry keyboardist Mitchell's sevdalz whiz include Cuban violinist Omar Puente and Michael Mendez on bass. Brighton Dome (23 January), Leeds The Roundhouse (30), London Jazz Cafe (2 February), London Ocean 2 (quarter only, 14 March) and Farnham Assembly Arts Centre (16)

### MICHAEL ORMISTON & CANDIDA VALENTINO

Long-time student of Mongolian overtone singing (khöömey) plays traditional melodies and improvisations with Spral Arts dancers Bryony Williams & Lu Blake. London Alternatives at St James's Church, 7 January, 7pm, £10/£5, 020 7287 6711, [www.alternatives.org.uk](http://www.alternatives.org.uk)

### OXFORD IMPROVISORS

Free associating musicians Tim Hill (sax), Dominic Lash (double bass), Francesco Serpetti (piano), Evan Thomas (guitar) and Alex Ward

## International Festivals

### BRITISH MODERN MUSIC FESTIVAL

TURKEY  
Imaginatively titled broad ranging music festival featuring improvised music from legendary saxophonist Enrico Pieraccini in the live electroacoustic environment of Lawrence Casserley (16 January); electrocias from Tim Tardini and Four Tet live and a DJ set by Andrew Barker (17); dance music from Ünal Celal Dilek, Terry Francis and Mark Kneale (18), and indie rockers Prawn and Quickspace (19). There will also be video screenings of punk era films *The Great Rock 'N'*



## STARS OF THE LID oscil

### EUROPEAN TOUR JANUARY 2002

all dates subject to change, check [www.kranky.net](http://www.kranky.net) for details

#### 15 PARIS, FRANCE

#### 16 DIXMUIDE, BELGIUM

#### 17 AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS vpro radio session

#### 18 MALMO, SWEDEN

#### 19 GOTENBERG, SWEDEN

#### 20 OSLO, NORWAY

#### 21 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

#### 22 COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

#### 24 BRUXELLES, BELGIUM

#### 25 HASSELT, BELGIUM

#### 27 BRIGHTON, ENGLAND stars of the lid only

#### 29 NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND stars of the lid only

#### 30 MANCHESTER, ENGLAND stars of the lid only

#### 31 LONDON, ENGLAND stars of the lid only

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(dancing) playing) in various combinations. Belfast 31 John's College Auditorium, 24 January, 8pm, free, 0771 3056202

#### PUPPET MASTAZ

Mutant puppet-headed HipHop team supported by Howie, R.J., Saul Kane and Tim 'Love' Lee. London 93 Feet East, 31 January, 8pm-2am, £7/£4, 020 7247 3293, [www.93feeteast.co.uk](http://www.93feeteast.co.uk)

#### HENRY ROLLINS BAND

The human firebreath returns. Belfast Ulster Hall (10), Dublin Vicar St (11), Cork Savoy (12), Glasgow Garage (14), Newcastle University (15), Whitehaven Civic Hall (17), Dudley Jive (18), Sheffield Leadmill (19), Nottingham Rock City (20), Cambridge Junction (21), Norwich Waterfront (22)

#### STARS OF THE LID + ROTTHO

Amber ethereeness from Austin, Texas guitar duo and Kranky label artists supported by the symphonic rock band who have now expanded to a seven piece with extra electronics, "scrapped sound" and orchestration. London Komische Kultur, Upstarts at the Garage (26), Brighton Saucery Cafe (27), Nottingham The Old Vic (29), Manchester Star & Garter (30), London Arts Centre (31)

#### SPIRIT TALK MBIRA

Zimbabwean thumb-piano led ensemble. Bristol St George's, 17 January, 7:30pm, £14/£6, 0117 923 0359

#### JOHN SURMAN

Solo saxophones and clarinet performance with electro riffs from the esteemed jazz player. Bristol St George's, 17 January, 8pm, £12/£10, 0117 923 0359

#### JOHN TAYLOR

UK jazz pioneer's 60th birthday tour in a trio with bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joey Baron, as well as with the eight-piece Creative Jazz Orchestra which includes Julian Arguelles, Ben Marshall and Martin France. London Queen Elizabeth Hall (23 January), Bristol Arnolfini (24), Liverpool Unity Theatre (25), Birmingham CBSO Centre (26), Birminghams Anvil (27), Sheffield Crucible (28)

#### THE WALKABOUTS

US street folk/punk outfit play a one-off date London Ocean, 21 January, £10, 020 7314 2800, [www.ocean.org.uk](http://www.ocean.org.uk)

#### BRIAN WILSON

Beach Boys co-founder makes a rare and unexpected appearance with a ten-piece band. London Royal Festival Hall, 27 January, 7:30pm, £22.50-£50, 020 7960 4201, [www.rfh.org.uk](http://www.rfh.org.uk)

#### ZU + GUAPDO

John Zorn-tipped instrumental Italian four piece plus ferocious rock-complexity in support. London Vortex with Cheap Engine (18 January), Cardiff Os Bar (23), Dublin Whelans (24), Limerick venue tbc (25), and Cork Peacock Lodge (26)

AMM percussionist Eddie Prevost is in the with laplopers Martin and Roxy Parlane, Jim Finn, composer of the 1000 year piece Longplayer, performs a live audio-visual reworking of *The Wizard Of Oz*, plus a laptop solo set from Neil's own Seal. London The Civic, 20 January 8pm, £5 includes live CD, 020 7734 9836, homepage [rdworld.com/mwaterfield/video.htm](http://rdworld.com/mwaterfield/video.htm)

#### BAGGAGE RECLAIM

Open-armed mix of pop and experimentation. Intense electric and acoustic improv from Vif; dirty techno from Glasgow's Neck Cracker; generative laptop music from Si-(out)it; electro and Powerbook with virtuosity and a sense of humour from David Basow, and electro-clothing hem host Richard Sentance, plus visuals by Seal. Grand Pix London 12 Fri, 27 January, 8pm, £6, 020 7915 6889, [www.bagget.com](http://www.bagget.com)

#### BREAKIN' BREAD

HipHop monthly with guest DJs Leacy and Yoda, guest breakdance crews Foundation and Force 10 and resident DJs London Joe, 12 January 8pm-late, £3-£7, 07967 547008, [www.breakinbread.org](http://www.breakinbread.org)

#### CONSUME

Argentinian outsider artists Reynolds play this night of sonic anarchy, supported by Osoape Glasgow 13th Note Cafe, 8:30pm-midnight, £4, 0141 553 1638, [www.consume-hessen.co.uk](http://www.consume-hessen.co.uk)

#### EAT YOUR OWN EARS

Rapheus Records night with Outcast live plus Ois Cyff, DMX Krew, Brisker D Barnes aka Aphex Twin, Leon and Luke Vorient aka Wagon Christ. London 93 Feet East, 18 January, 8pm-2am, £8/£10, 020 7247 3293, [www.rephlex.com](http://www.rephlex.com)

#### ELECTRONIC BRAIN

New Welsh night for electronica, Hip-Hop and post-rock noise. Leaflet John, giddy drum 'n' bass from Techtonic, spoken word cut-ups from Mr 9 Computers and resident DJs Internet, acoustic and board games in the back room. Cardiff Metropolitain, 2 January, 029 2037 1549, [www.electronicbrain.in.net](http://www.electronicbrain.in.net)

#### KLINKER

Longstanding improv and off-the-wall club Jan Ligd, March Medics & Dave Fowler, the archaic doctobell collection of Blow Sirens, Iron Norway, Ingr Zoch, Ivar Grydeland & Karl Seglem (3 January); Tom Calwood, Alan Wilkerson & Tim Geddie duo and Terri Kates, Ingr Zoch, Pat Thomas, Ivar Grydeland & Hugh Mcleish (10); The Collectable Jenifer, Stephen Grew and Sean McPhee, Murphy No Gedha (17); Larry Stabbins, Pat Thomas, Alan Quarrat & Liam Gencovsky (24). They Come From The Sea (25), Paul Dostmal, Tony Marsh, Sand trombonist Harry Jeffreys, John Adams & Philip Gibbs (26) launch (31), London The Sussex, 8pm, £4/£3, 020 8806 8216, [www.theklinker.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.theklinker.freeserve.co.uk)

#### NO-FI

Laptop down and manipulated DJ set from Kalle Notchies, electronic music on wooden instruments from GOMDRRAHIN, plus Posset and Jaeger. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne The Bringe, 26 January, 7:30pm, £6, 0191 232 6400

#### NUPHUNK

Perf Naphunk and guests spin electronica, HipHop, dub and four-deck sound spectrums London 93 Feet East, 10 and 24 January, 6pm-2am, free, 020 7247 3293, [www.93feeteast.co.uk](http://www.93feeteast.co.uk)

#### PLUG + PLAY

Tun up with your own instrument or computer

### Club Spaces

#### ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Electronic, surfaced beats, melodic flourishes and foily hooks at this new monthly residency. This month Wrep Records DJs vs Wren's Chis Clark, London Embassy, Sat, 11 January, 8pm-1am, £3 after 10pm, 020 7399 7882

#### AUDIT

New monthly club focusing on new directions in experimental electronica and improvised music

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Purcell Room

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## Stereolab

Live at the Royal Festival Hall  
Fri 1 Feb 2002 RFH 8pm

'One of the freshest, most pleasurable things  
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Stereolab make their debut appearance at the RFH with their compelling blend of futuristic and retrograde pop. Book early to avoid disappointment.

## Marc Ribot

Live at the Purcell Room  
Sun 3 Feb 2002 PUR 8pm

'In the direction of genius.' *Time Out*

Downright live! guitar hero Marc Ribot has worked with everyone from Elvis Costello and Marianne Faithfull to Allen Ginsberg and Tricky. Tonight he makes a rare, solo appearance at the QEH.

MOJO



# MERZ NITE

friday  
late view

Friday 25 January 2002  
6.30pm - 10.00pm

### What's MERZ?

The 4 letters remained after didactic KURT SCHNITTERS tore into a poster which read "KOMMERZ UND PRIVAT-BANK", summarising everything the didactic opposed: commercialism, private property, financial institutions. MERZ was "Schwitters' name for Neustadt, a collage, a poem "written" with a rubber-stamp, vociferous "sound" poetry, a domestic junk-sculpture bursting through the ceiling.

We promise imperceptible sound-image dyschrony, amplified vibrato fretting, tender bits, true disillusion of the dispossessed.

**From Spectre:** 30 free-impressions of sound and word - including Let's Coshell, Tom Reehoff, Maggi Cullinan, Ross Culshaw, Mark R. Oei, Le Marché and Graeme H. Pelt - prepared to be distributed at different times and in different places. The first 100 people to visit the Vitra MERZ collection see projected beneath the dome.

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# Out There

and plug it in to take part in this open source event. London Public Life, 27 January, 4pm-late, free, [www.gabba.net](http://www.gabba.net)

## RE-TOX WITH KING MOB COLLECTIVE

Experimental music and video with Matt Ward, King Mob Collective, Tisay & Lawrence's harmonium and video cut-ups, new mixes from Duncan George, plus human, film and video installations. Electra Phoenix, 25 January, 8.30pm-1am, £6/£4, 01392 667080

## SEEN

Homer Records and DJ present Latin soul and electro boogaloo with special guests Parsonsens (6), Me Me Headluck (13), Ossyphro (20) and Reg (27). London Play Sundays, 5pm-midnight, free, 020 7737 7090

## SLACK SABBATH

Across the board weekly DJ sessions. Resident DJ Discreet with special guests Parsonsens (6), Me Me Headluck (13), Ossyphro (20) and Reg (27). London Play Sundays, 5pm-midnight, free, 020 7737 7090

## SONIC MOOK EXPERIMENT NYE

Richard Fawless, Idris Drost, Distributist, Rowan Chernia, Sean McQuaid and others see in the New Year London Plus 31 December, 8pm-6am, £20 includes buffet and glass of champagne, 020 7737 7090

## SOUND 323

Indie concert series at this record shop kiosk off Oxford street with the improving duo of Legit Zach on percussions and live Gryendlan on guitar (9 January) and continues with Tim Golden on percussions and Michael Rogers on guitar (12). London Sound 323, 9 January, 9pm, free, 020 8348 9595

## THE SPRAWL

This Internet bar monthly celebrates its sixth year of electronica and more with a performance by Jim Finer, composer of the 1000 year composition Longplayer, plus slow-building elliptical soundscapes in vinyl from Janek Schaefer. Plus visuals. London Global Cafe, 10

January, 7.30pm-midnight, £4/£3, 020 7287 2242, [www.djuse.com/sprawl/](http://www.djuse.com/sprawl/)

## STRANGE ANGELS ARE AFLOAT

Angular acoustic sessions featuring Kevin Hopper, Teby Slater, Oreylo, Keith John Adams and The Free French. London 12 Bar Club, 13 January, 8pm, £5, 020 7916 6089

## VAWN MARL

The month's chosen name for the Bohemian Brothers Improv space. Tim Galke & Ross Lambert and special guest (7 January), from Norway Ingvoldeland, legar Zoch, Tonny Klauen & Håkon Kornstad joined by Phil Minton & Pat Thomas (14), Mike Johns & Will Evans duo and Adam Bohman, Simon Vincent & Graham Hillwell (21) and Tom Wallace & Nick Parker duo and The Barber Twins (28). London Upsilon at the Bonnington Centre, 8pm, £4/£3, 01932 571323

## VORTEX

Nightly jazz in a North London jazz bar. This month includes Eric Parrot's Date of the Hog (1 January), Billy Jenkins (9, 16, 23 & 30), Jason Arguelles with The Vix (11), Ed Jones (17) and THREE + ONE where feature solos by John Edward, Mark Sanders & Vernon Weston as well as a trio. London Vortex, 020 7254 6516

## XEN-SOLO STEEL

Nina Tuna monthly label night. New Flash ma dacehall, two step and leftfield R&B into the HipHop mix with Juice Alemen and Tootie Taylor, whilst DJ Yodin collaborates with beatbox supremo Killer Killa (Rocksteady Crew) and Swedish poet MC Isash. Brovo, London Corgo, 31 January, 8pm-1am, £6, 020 7739 3440

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## Incoming

### JOAN JEANRENAU: METAMORPHOSIS

Ex-Kronos Quartet cellist presents an evening length multimedia programme which includes

collaborations with five video artists and electronics. Works include an arrangement of Philip Glass's piano piece Metamorphosis alongside commissioned works from Yoko Ono, Ken Tanaka, Haruhi Doi and Steve Mackey. Brookfield South Hill Park Arts Centre (25 February), Brighton Dome (27), London Queen Elizabeth Hall (1 March), Convergy Warwick Arts Centre (3)

### MICHAEL BRECKER LARGE ENSEMBLE

The saxophonist's saxophonist, Brecker tours with arranger and multi-instrumentalist Gil Goldstein and ten other leading jazz musicians from the UK and US. London Queen Elizabeth Hall (25 February), Cambridge Corn Exchange (26), Basingstoke The Arive (27), Durham Gala Theatre (28), Birmingham Symphony Hall (1 March)

### ODIN BYRON

New York clarinetist tours a daytime programme for children, Big Music For Juniors and an evening programme, You Are# More Music For Six Musicians. Bristol Arnolfini (7 March), Kendal Bewsey Arts Centre (8-9), Birmingham MAC (10-11), London Barbican (12), Leeds The Wardrobe (13), Mansfield Leisure Centre (14), Brighton Corn Exchange (15), Southampton Turner Sims Concert Hall (16)

### OTHER MINDS FESTIVAL 8 USA

Three days of concerts and artists' forums. Featured artists include Lou Harrison, Pauline Oliveros, Ellen Fullman, Anna Lockwood and Richard Teitelbaum. San Francisco various venues, times/prices tbc, 7-9 March 2002, 001 415 382 4400, [www.othersounds.org](http://www.othersounds.org)

### ONLY CONNECT

London Barbican Centre's annual series of new collaborations and projects. This year's specialty

commissioned performances include: Marianne Faithfull with special guests (March 10); John Zorn, The Guit World première (25), Mak Music, Alfi Bocoum & Damon Albarn (26), Craig Armstrong songs & films (7 April), Yo La Tengo, The Sounds Of Science (25), Sugoi Ris & Hime One Hi-Mission, Odini's Raven Magic (21) and Play Mouse On Mars and Post in a celebration of computer game music (27). London Barbican, times/prices vary, 020 7838 8891, details at [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

## ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES USA

Rescheduled Sono youth-curated festival featuring Bedoreens, Cannibal Ox, Dead C, Tony Conrad, Television, Stereolab, Sons Of Youth, Jodek, O Motherucker, Husk Mon, Cecil Taylor, Peaches, Pita, Sister Kinney, Kevin Drumm, Leah Singer and many others. Los Angeles UCLA, 15-17 March, \$100, [www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk](http://www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk)

## ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES UK

Curated by Steve Albini and featuring Shellec, The Fall, Low, Ironie Verlaine, Mett Banana, Bonnie Prince Billy, Wire, Zem Gava, The Breeders and others. Camber Sands Holiday Centre, 19-21 and 26-28 April, £100, [www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk](http://www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk)

## Get These Items for Inclusion in the February Issue

should reach us by Friday 11 January, Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, [listings@thewire.co.uk](mailto:listings@thewire.co.uk). Please do not send email listings as attachments. All listings information MUST include a contact phone number, start time and ticket price. Listings cannot be taken over the phone.

# UK Radio

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JOHN PEEL

Tuesday-Thursday 10pm-midnight

The inkle nation's bible

GILLES PETERSON

Wednesday midnight-2am Post-Acid jazz

FABIO & GROOVEROOWER

Friday 2-4am Vengaboys drum 'n' bass

WESTWOODO RAP SHOW

Friday 11pm-2am Saturday 8pm-midnight

High-top faves

REGGAE DANCEHALL NITE

Saturday midnight-2am Bass culture

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM

LATE JUNCTION

Monday-Thursday 10.15-11midnight

New Music compendium

JAZZ LEGENDS

Friday 4-5pm Archive reisettings

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## Regional

ANDY KERSHAW

Friday 10.15-11.30pm World Music

JAZZ ON 3

Friday 11.30pm-1am

Modern jazz in session and concert.

WORLD ROUTES

Saturday 1-2pm

Lucy Dacus presents a trawlogue of global music

JAZZ FILE

Saturday 6-8.30pm

Documentary magazine

HEAR AND NOW

Saturday 10.45pm-1am

New Music magazine

MIXING IT

Sunday 11pm-midnight

Hyper-electric mix of avant sounds

BBC LANCASHIRE

95.5/103.9/104.5 FM, 855 MW

ON THE WIRE

Sunday 8-10pm

The Wire's Steve Barker mixes it up wildstyle

BBC MERSEYSIDE

95.8 FM, 1485 MW

PMS

Sunday midnight-2am Eclectic mix of avant sounds

BBC SCOTLAND 92.4-94.7 FM

FROM BEBOP TO HIPHOP

Wednesday 7.05-9pm Sunday 10.05pm-midnight

Jazz and re-beats

CABLE RADIO 89.8 FM (MILTON KEYNES)

THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

Friday 10pm-midnight Eclectic avant mus

KISS 100 FM (LONDON)

PATRICK FORGE

Sunday 10pm-midnight Eclectic jazz-not-yet infx

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4 HERO

Monday 2-4am Jazz, Jungle, cyber-soul, breakbeats

MATT JAM LAMONT

Wednesday 2-4am Monk breakfast science

LONDON LIVE 94.9 FM

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## URI CAINE ENSEMBLE

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**Info & manifesto:** Lou Kammerling

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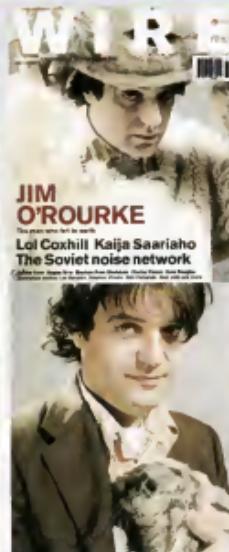
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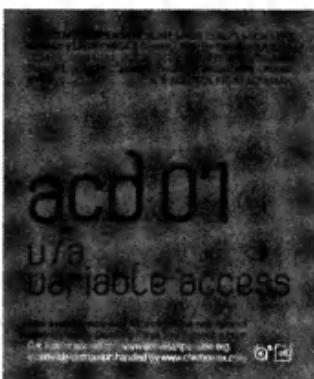
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# Epiphanies

Jim Haynes loves and loses in Coil's secret domain

*Iester song at twilight: Coil, mid 90s*

In 1994, when I moved to San Francisco after graduating from college, I had an unpleasant introduction to the city with the discovery that my rental truck had been broken into and my entire CD collection stolen. While this loss felt unnecessarily cruel at the time, I gave myself permission for certain records to fall out of favour and desperately searched for others that spoke beyond the fetishising need to collect, qualify and categorise. Current 93's Dogs Blood Rising, The Birthday Party's Prayers On Five and Autecine's incubatula may share little in common, but these were three records whose artistic worth demanded that I drop whatever money I had (which was very little at that time) to have these recordings near me again. With equal parts persistence and luck, I managed to rebuild a pretty good musical library, with the exception of one elusive record that inevitably became something of a holy grail: Coil's *Love's Secret Domain* (1991). Judging from the ridiculous inflated prices this album had been fetching on eBay, I wasn't alone in this quest.

Without a copy to remind me of its aesthetic attributes, my feeble capacity for memory glossed over the majority of *Love's Secret Domain's* details. I could remember Anne Anxiety asking, "What's it like Ohio?" during her guest appearance on "Things Happen", I had spent four very cold winters just south of Lake Erie learning the finer points of politically correct etiquette. The low slung basslines of *Love's Secret Domain's* dancin'for' filters, "The Snow" and "Windowpane", occasional emerged as internal melodies to the incongruous metronomic soundtrack inside my head, appearing at once totally familiar but completely alien away from its original context. But, everything in became a shadowy recollection of a really great album. Back then I couldn't tell you why I just knew.

By the time I was able to obtain the record at a reasonable price, seven years had passed and unbeknownst to me, the inevitable remastered reissue of *Love's Secret Domain* was just a few months away. My attitudes towards Coil had of course changed,

None of their recordings since *Love's Secret Domain* quite measured up to that album, or perhaps more accurately, what I believed it to be. When the time came to actually listen to it again, I found it awkward, strange and not at all what I had remembered it to be. I had wanted *Love's Secret Domain* to be a seamless genealogical bridge between the transgressive antagonism of industrial culture and the sublime cybernetics of IDM, Microhouse and the Raster glitch. But it was not. To compound my memory's gross misinterpretation, I discovered that in reality it showed little interest in addressing the UK Acid House scene in which Coil's members John Balance and Peter Christopherson dabbled during its heyday in the late 80s and early 90s.

*Love's Secret Domain* opens with "Disco Hospital", a track which Matmos have recently resurrected as a superb homage to Coil for their California Rhinoplasty EP. The original is a Fairlight collage of comically disfigured voices which gradually give way to a sly House rhythm and equally whimsical organ groove. Immediately, Coil had stepped outside of the object themes and apocalyptic poetry found on their preceding albums. Sociology and Horse Rotorvator, with a sound that embraced the carnivalesque as means of giddy transgression. Coil had maintained their passion for the oblique, the occult and the otherworldly, but wanted their audience to enjoy it a whole lot more. The introduction of the recurring "Teenage Lightning" theme as an electronically twisted tango and the aforementioned appearance of Anne Anxiety on "Things Happen", with her Spanish inflected taxonomy of domesticity becoming insinuity, add a twist of Almodóvar-style madness to Coil's surrealism.

While I had recalled more or less accurately "The Snow" and "Windowpane" as the album's "hits", what with their sexy Techno grooves and immediate catchiness, the bracketing tracks were the biggest surprises of my reimmersion into *Love's Secret Domain*. They made me realise I had all but forgotten how masterful Coil's perversion of their samples had

become. "Dark River", with its reversed bell tones and gently plucked Spanish guitar (courtesy of Juan Ramírez), is a bittersweet flicker of a song that is almost lost within the rest of the album's big electronic beats. Coil's use of digdando on "Further Back And Faster" and "Where Even The Darkness Is Something To See" is thankfully dispensed by complementary samples and electronic swarms.

Drawing the album to a close, the title track is one of the few instances on *Love's Secret Domain* where John Balance steps forward with a voice that he has stated to be inadequate for the group's music. Well, his may not be as polished a voice as longtime Coil friend Marc Almond, who makes an appearance on the funeral "Titan ARIH", but Balance's crackling howls, paired with a simple, harmonious delivery, match well with Coil's thematic dichotomies between the pure elegance of innocence, joy and love, and the desperation of madness, sex and violence. Such a mucosal shift in emotion plays out when Balance soars through "My heart is a rose", only to immediately follow it with the growled next line: "Dh, this is mad love/in love's secret domain."

Coil's great success has always rested in the Techgnostic seduction of what they reveal and what they hide in their labyrinthine tales. Crowleyan magickal incantations, chemically engineered time travel and the accumulation of male sexual energy have been a few of the boldest examinations in their extensive catalogue, yet the music through which they express these ideas never sees the most obvious means of communication. In an interview in *The Wire* 134, Peter Christopherson stated, "Obviously the term sidereal relates to stars, but also through wordplay to looking at reality sideways, from a new angle or perspective... We adopted a similar process with sound. We've always been into sonic deviation and experimentation." If my luck holds, I won't need the perspective of missing this record for seven years to remember how devilishly good Coil have been. □ A remastered edition of *Love's Secret Domain* has just been released on Threshold House



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